

WINDUK SURFING

Issue 5 October 17

FOILING #2

further adventures in flying

GIBSON IN FUERTE

Stephen Gibson profile

MELLON USAGE

Finn Mellon profile

THE TOURIST

Dan Newman's PWA experience

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with Mic Brignall

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TECHNIQUE:

SIMON BORNHOFT WINDWISE & SIMON WINKLEY FUNDAMENTALS

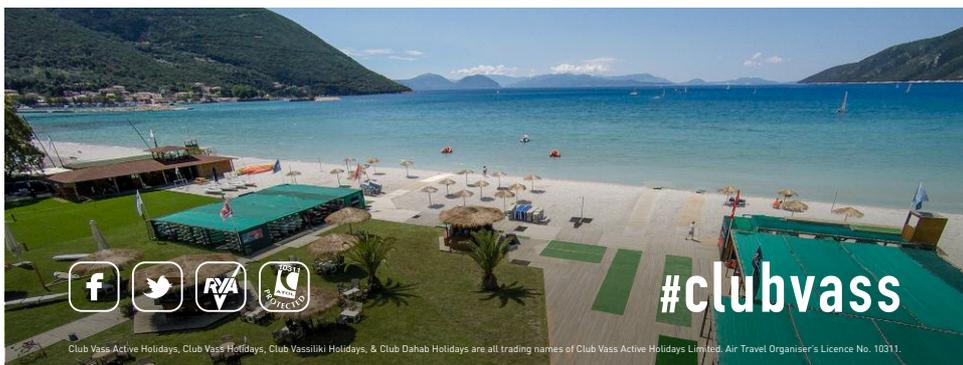


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WINDuk SURFING

FOR THE BETTER...

To echo sentiments elsewhere in this issue of Windsurfing UK (by Pete Davis) it really annoys me when comments are banded round suggesting windsurfing has had its day. If that was the case we wouldn't have as many brands vying for your hard earned coin as we do, beaches wouldn't be stacked with riders every breezy period and windy holiday destinations wouldn't be reporting increasing visitor numbers.

I'll admit there may have been a slump in equipment sales around the time of the economic crash a few years ago. And it may have been a slow claw back from the brink. Brand spanking new wave boards might not be everyone's priority but I'm still seeing new (or newer) gear being rigged up on beaches and smiles miles wide post-session.

New technologies are being put in place as far as manufacturing goes and then of course there's the foiling element that's on everyone's mind and which we dedicate a large chunk of this issue to.

Windsurfing: dead and gone? I think not! The thirst for more brine time is as tangible as ever. It's also nice to see (finally) sailors broadening their horizons in terms of getting out in all kinds of conditions on all types of gear. Marginal wind, strong wind, waves and flat water it's all good!

These days floating about in light airs seems more popular than ever. Maybe we've all realised that time on the water, outside and away from the screen/phone, is more important than chasing full power conditions. It's nice to see and be part of – long may it continue.

TEZ PLAVENIEKS
OCTOBER 2017

Twitter: @tezwoz

Instagram: @tez_plavenieks_sup_wind



Foils (again)

Yes, I know, it's that term again! Sorry to keep on but the fact is windsurf foiling, windfoiling, freefoiling or whatever (however) else you want to describe it looks set to stick. There are still teething issues surrounding the kit – in particular its expense. There's also a fundamental change in thinking needed to become a fully immersed hover boarder. But there's no denying the traction foiling has gained in 2017.

WSUK started the year having shined a testing spotlight on AHD's Shark foil board and AFS-1 foil. We round out our journey by re-examining the same foil coupled with the brand's Sealion Wings 7.6ft – a very different kind of board to the Shark and one which is arguably more accessible. I appreciate there's now a raft of other flying gear available but AHD were one of the first to bring the whole thing to market so it makes sense to focus on the French based company. Stay tuned though as we'll be looking at more foiling equipment moving forwards.

The rest of this issue of Windsurfing UK has a whole heap of other windy goodness for you to lap up. As we head into autumn/winter hopefully you'll be scoring conditions – whatever/wherever they may be – and having a ruddy good ole time afloat. Enjoy the mag and we'll see you again, back at it, in the New Year. Now, go rig up.

RRD

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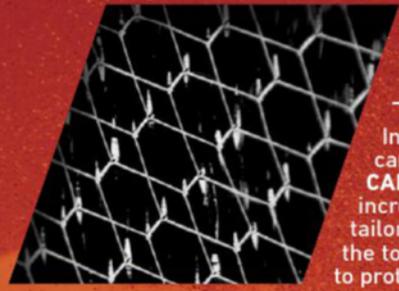


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 JON POPKISS,
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CLARE'S COLUMN

WHERE THE LADIES AT?

Windsurfing is, and always has been, a male dominated sport. Women are generally perceived to be the spectators, photographers, kit caddies or simply admirers of on water antics. But why is this? I'm writing to express my thoughts and explore the reasons why I believe fewer

women windsurf than men. This is for every woman; to encourage you and help you understand that windsurfing is as much for you as it is for the boys.

One of the biggest misconceptions is strength. Here at Club Vass I asked the team (both men and women) why they thought more men windsurfed than women, and the overwhelming response was: 'men are stronger than women'. Yes, if you look at statistics, men are generally stronger, but you don't have to be made of muscle to windsurf. I believe learning to windsurf is often more about the mind. I asked the Club Vass team (again) what they thought was the most important out of strength or technique, and every one of them said technique.

Proof of this is when you see kids as young as eight (who are teeny) flying around, fully planing and even doing freestyle tricks. A strong man may even find that using brute force can be counter-productive in making progress. A woman cannot use as much strength and so has to rely on superior technique, therefore enabling better progression. So ladies who believe they aren't Mrs Hulk, you've got no excuse, it's mind over muscles!

Another issue is the intimidation some women feel within such a male dominated sport. Recently one of my advanced lady students said she had been doing the intermediate course at Club Vass for years because she felt too intimidated to join the advanced group with all the men. But this year she saw that myself, Becky Willis and Heidi Jabbari were teaching the advanced group and she was more than happy to join in. For those ladies out there who feel intimidated by men, STOP! If it helps, find other women to sail with and learn from. Or sail with the guys –



Words: Clare Elliott
Pic: Richard Bray

Clare Elliott is a Club Vass pro coach and PWA competitor (as of 2017).

they absolutely love and respect a lady who windsurfs, trust me! I could list more reasons why I think ladies windsurf less than men, but instead I'm going to give you a few words of encouragement.

If you didn't know, I'm a female windsurfer lucky enough to work at Club Vass, alongside an amazing team of males and females (including four RYA advanced level female instructors!). I teach all levels, from beginner to advanced, and am lucky enough to share my passion for the sport with everyone as equals. Instead of dwelling on the reasons more girls don't windsurf, I think we should come together and just start sharing the passion.

Women's freestyle is becoming hugely popular within the female team at Club Vass and the girls are absolutely ripping! A lot of this is due to female support and encouragement, something we girls are very good at. It's also important not to take it too seriously, it's about windsurfing together and having a laugh.

This July I competed in the PWA World Tour event in Fuerteventura against nine of the most talented and highest ranked women in the world (yes there were only ten of us!), but together we helped each other throughout the whole competition. Competing at this level was one of my biggest dreams and goals. I made it happen, partly because I really wanted it (and I didn't let anything phase me) but also because of the support from everyone around me. It doesn't matter if you're young, old, small or large this is a sport for absolutely anyone. If you want to get into windsurfing, just to have fun or get to the highest level, you need to get on with it. And the great advantage for ladies is the encouragement we give each other. So go for it sistas!

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DAVIS LOWDOWN

WINDSURFING ACCORDING TO PETE AND ZARA DAVIS

Pete:

Running the risk of sounding like a grumpy old man (I know...if the cap fits) one thing that does really annoy me though, is people knocking windsurfing. You know the ones, "Windsurfing has had its day!" "No one windsurfs anymore" and so on. These people don't see the great work and enthusiasm that I see. The very successful RYA T15 program that I am proud to be part of as an instructor does amazing things with kids from as young as eight all over the country.

Teaching skills that we now take for granted seeing these Playstation generation kids improve is a joy to see. It's sometimes hard for them as windsurfing is not available as an app; they are from a group used to mastering something in 30 minutes and moving up to the next level. But with the right encouragement these little ones stick at it and do so without complaint. It's huge smiles and a massive sense of achievement all round.

I was even more impressed recently having just returned from Fuerteventura's World Speed Championships where they had the biggest fleet of under 17s ever and the youngest was only nine! These boys and girls did the same amount of hour long heats as the men, in the same 40 plus knot winds and a few were putting the men to shame with speeds over 35 knots!

These kids are the future of our sport and need to be recognised and applauded. We have some great emerging talent in the UK. Scotty Stallman in slalom, Emma Wilson in RS:X and many, many more. So, we all know someone who wants to take up windsurfing or did it before and gave it up for some reason they can't remember. If we want our sport to develop we all need to do our bit to promote it and encourage participation rather than be down on it.

Windsurfing is not easy. If you see a windsurfer out planing and gybing you know they have put in about two years of



Pete Davis is an accomplished windsurfer who works hard behind the scenes, promoting teaching and encouraging. Zara is a world champion speed sailor and also does her bit to help develop and grow windsurfing

hard work over weekends and holidays to get to that standard. Let's be honest if it was easy, kitesurfers would be doing it too (joke)!

Zara:

Speedsailors are just nice people, it's true! As Pete has said we have just come back from the Speed World Championships hosted by the Dunkerbeck GPS Speed event. These guys and girls are just a joy to spend time with. Don't get me wrong there are arseholes in the world. I can go into Bristol and bump into a dozen in one day but at a speed event it is rare to find one.

I was having this discussion while we were away, in a mixed group from around the world, including some who were attending a speed event for the first time. The first timers were a bit daunted before they arrived and could not believe how friendly everyone was. I think it's down to the fact that we are not necessarily competing with each other as you would in a race but against a clock against yourself and against the conditions and if you're not fast enough... Well, you only have yourself to blame.

This is from the everyday weekend speed warriors to the top flight guys. Where else would you see the likes of Antoine Albeau helping tune the sails of his rival Anders Bringdal at the Speed World Record attempt at Luderitz? If you want to see this camaraderie first-hand the best place is Weymouth Speed Week coming up this and every October. For the past 40 plus years these speed freaks meet help and support each other to go faster. If you have never tried it give it a go.

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NEILPRYDE

MELLON USAGE



Tell us firstly where windsurfing all started for you. When and where did you get into it and what keeps you hooked?

It all started off with my dad, Niall Mellon. It took me quite a long time to get into windsurfing. I was more of a football fanatic but Dad would persuade me to come sailing by giving me ice creams – effective method! My Dad was a highly qualified instructor for years so I was and still am super lucky to have him behind me. I learned on a pond near my house. I found starting off pretty tricky and hard work but once I got planing I was hooked and have been hooked ever since then! What keeps me coming back is the excitement of wave sailing. For me, nothing beats getting right under the lip and smacking it.

Give us an overview of your local sailing area. What's good about it, what's not so great and what options do you have based on conditions?

I live in Brandon Bay in the south west of Ireland. When it works it is a wave sailing heaven. We have seven miles of golden sandy beaches which can offer you every type of sailing you could want. It is a semicircular shaped bay allowing access to all wind directions from offshore to onshore. The only negative is it is not very consistent. It is hard to get multiple days in a row the same like you do in the Canaries for instance. Also the winter often gets too much wind, swell and rain!

Who's your sailing crew and how do they contribute to your overall windsurfing experience?

In winter my sailing crew is very limited, most of the time it is only my Dad and I. I am lucky to have my Dad sailing by my side all the time. Dad and I are pretty competitive so it means we are always trying to out sail each other. I believe it is essential to always have someone that will push your sailing. My Dad acts as a coach to me. We spend a lot of time on the beach filming or taking photos sailing or surfing and then we analyze the footage to see how we can improve.

You're known as a wave sailor predominantly but do you dabble in other areas of windsurfing, if so what?

I surf a lot, does that count?! I want to spend more time learning freestyle as there is such a big cross over between the two windsurf styles when sailing places like Pozo.

WORDS: FINN MELLON
PICS: ALL PICS NIALL MELLON UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED
FINN MELLON HAS AN IDYLIC WINDSURFING LIFE. BASED ON THE DINGLE PENINSULA, IRELAND AND HAVING BRANDON BAY, PLUS SURROUNDS, AS HIS WINDSURF/SURF PLAYGROUND IT'S NO WONDER THE YOUNG RIPPER IS TURNING HEADS. We caught up with Finn following his recent stint in the Canaries, having had a dig at both PWA events in Pozo, Gran Canaria and Cabezo, Tenerife.



14 PROFILE FINN MELLON

What moves/skills are you currently working on and how's this going?

Talking onshore, my main aim for visiting the Canaries was to improve my jumping so I put work into my back loops and forwards. I also learned how to do backside 360s which is a pretty cool onshore move. Now that I am back at home I will be making it my goal to start smashing out wave 360s. They are one of favourite wave moves. They look so stylish on a wave.



Recently you spent time in the Canaries having a dig at the PWA. How did this go? Any particular highlights?

I spent six weeks in the Canaries training my onshore sailing in Pozo and Cabezo. I had real fun. I got on the water every day for the whole time I was there. I got to hang out with PWA stars like Jaeger Stone, Adam Lewis and Robby Swift. Not much more I could ask for really...

For me the competition was not my best but I am still happy with how it went, as I know onshore Pozo style sailing is not my strong point. So to contest against the local hotshots is a result for me.

And what about not so great experiences?

Having my new 2018 GA sails get stuck in customs for almost three weeks was really a pain. I needed them on countless occasions such as my second heat in the

junior event where I was sailing super overpowered on my 3.6m while my 3.3m was sitting on the other side of the island. Oh yeah, I can't forget to mention the Pozo rocks, those mini boulders covered in slippery algae. They are pure carnage! Nobody escapes the rocks, even the stars have their fair share of run ins with them. It is either your gear or your body getting rinsed on them. If you were following the Pozo event you would have seen Loick Lesauvage break his foot in the shorebreak during his heat! It really surprises me how things like this don't happen more often on those rocks.

How difficult (or easy) was it to get to these comps to take on the world's best? Will you be doing more?

It is a fantastic experience that is easily accessible for anyone, I would truly recommend it for every junior windsurfer. The Canary Islands are easily accessible from

Oh yeah, I can't forget to mention the Pozo rocks, those mini boulders covered in slippery algae. They are pure carnage!



Photo: John Carter



Photo: Tim Smith



the UK. I have been travelling to Tenerife by myself since I was 14 years old. I plan to return for many years to come as I'll be chasing my dream and moving on into the main event. So I will hopefully be in Pozo next June competing in the men's comp.

As a pro what systems do you need in place to make things happen? For instance how do sponsors contribute (if at all) and who foots the bill for events and travel?

Money is the main thing needed to make this all happen. For me the aim is to find an outside industry sponsor that would be willing to help pay my travel expenses. At the moment I usually cover my costs with my own money and help from my main sponsor: mom and dad!

The best part of sailing in Ireland is definitely the amount of amazing uncrowded waves we have all the way up our coast.



With exposure in mind what do you do to keep the ball rolling and increase your visibility? What obligations do you have for sponsors?

Nowadays I believe social media is a key part of being an athlete. To succeed in sports like windsurfing or surfing I think it is essential to have good social media presence. My dad and I put a lot of effort into creating and capturing interesting content for our social media pages. If you would like to follow us hit up Instagram at @finn424 or @BrandonBayDiarys.

In an ideal world who would you have as sponsors, and how would you go about getting these on board?

For me the ideal sponsor would have to be a big money business such as Nike or RedBull that could support me financially as travelling and windsurfing are two expensive hobbies!

Any tips or advice for other aspiring young sailors coming up through the ranks?

Don't give up! Windsurfing is clearly a tough sport to make it in – as are all sports. I don't think you should allow anyone else decide your own fate. If someone says you can't make it then I say take that as motivation to prove them wrong.

Tell us what your plans are for the rest of the year. Any more travelling in the pipeline or you going to tough out the Irish winter?

This year is a big one for me now that I am finished with school. I am going to take 12 months out before going to college where I will be travelling to Australia

and Maui to train hard and have a lot of fun! I am really looking forward to wavesailing some epic spots and exploring some places that I have always dreamt of visiting.

Where's your fave all time location to sail and why (home or away)?

There are some places I haven't sailed yet that look dreamy such as Ponta Preta (Cape Verde) or Kona wind sailing at Lanes, Maui. But until I get the chance I will say my favourite place to sail is Three Peaks at home. It is a perfect A-frame beachie that can allow up to 10 turns. A perfect day there is mast high, cross off with just dad and I trading wave for wave. Doesn't get much better than that does it?

What's the best part of sailing in Ireland?

The best part of sailing in Ireland is definitely the amount of amazing uncrowded waves we have all the way up our coast. If you catch Ireland on the right forecast I can promise you will find the best waves of your life!

Finally I would like to give a shout out to everyone who helps me do what I do. Cheers to Mom and dad (Kathleen McAuliffe Hats Dingle), GA Sails, Quatro Windsurfing, O'Neill, K4Fins and Soloshot.

Plus if you want to follow Dad and I though our travels check out our Instagram accounts or my Facebook page

Me: @finn424

Dad: @BrandonBayDiarys

Facebook: Finn Mellon

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MEGABLAST WINDSURFING ADVENTURES IN ALACATI

WORDS: COLIN RALPH

PICS: COLIN RALPH & SIMON BORNHOFT

ALACATI IS A UNIQUE MEDITERRANEAN TOWN ON THE WESTERN COAST OF TURKEY, WHICH HAS BEEN FAMOUS FOR ITS ARCHITECTURE, VINEYARDS AND WINDMILLS FOR OVER 150 YEARS HAS ALSO MADE ITS NAME IN THE WORLD OF WINDSURFING AND KITESURFING. WITH CRYSTAL CLEAR WATER, CONSISTENT AND STEADY WIND DURING JUNE-AUGUST AND THEN THERE IS A CHANCE OF WIND FROM THE SOUTH IN OCTOBER. Alacati is one of the most rustic towns in Turkey with stone houses, narrow streets, boutique hotels and restaurants with tables on the streets. The area is also home to the Alacati yacht marina and the famous Port Alacati development, created by the French architect Francois Spoerry and his son, Yves Spoerry (ref.Wikipedia).

Like many windsurfers I have been aware of this location for a long time (thanks to PWA events and well fingered magazines of bygone days), but never had the chance or opportunity to visit and see what it's all about first hand. Based in Kuwait (for now) my wife and I opted for nine days early August in Alacati following a short hop to Latvia for a wedding (not ours!).

Pre-trip

Flights to Izmir – airport code ADB. Several carriers fly here with Thomas Cook running charters but Pegasus and Easyjet offer budget types also. There are direct options from Gatwick and Manchester as well as stopovers via Istanbul from a variety of regional airports (Bristol, Cardiff, Edinburgh and Glasgow to name a few). Don't be put off by this option as it is literally a 50-minute flight from Istanbul. Transfer to the airport can be arranged by hotel (200-250TL) or a taxi (around 350TL). Takes around an hour.





Hotels

Plenty to choose from and more on the way. There is something for everyone's budget, We stayed in the Labranda Princess which was a 4-star and all inclusive. It was pretty good and offered decent value for money. It is a big hotel and the pool and beach can be crowded, however, we never endured this as we were on the water for the best part of the whole day! It is a two-minute walk to the ASPC hire centre and has a Dolmus stop right at its door. Next door is the Alacati Beach Resort which is 5-star with a price to match. Slightly further from the hire centres is the Salto. Next year Biblos Beach Hotel will be complete and you literally couldn't get closer to the windsurfing than this location. For the more discerning/trendy/adventurous the town centre of Alacati has a plethora of 'Boutique' hotels. We saw plenty of them and they looked fun and quirky. They are based right in the heart so nightlife, eating and drinking are on tap. You will be a five-minute walk to the Dolmus stop and a five-minute ride to the sailing.

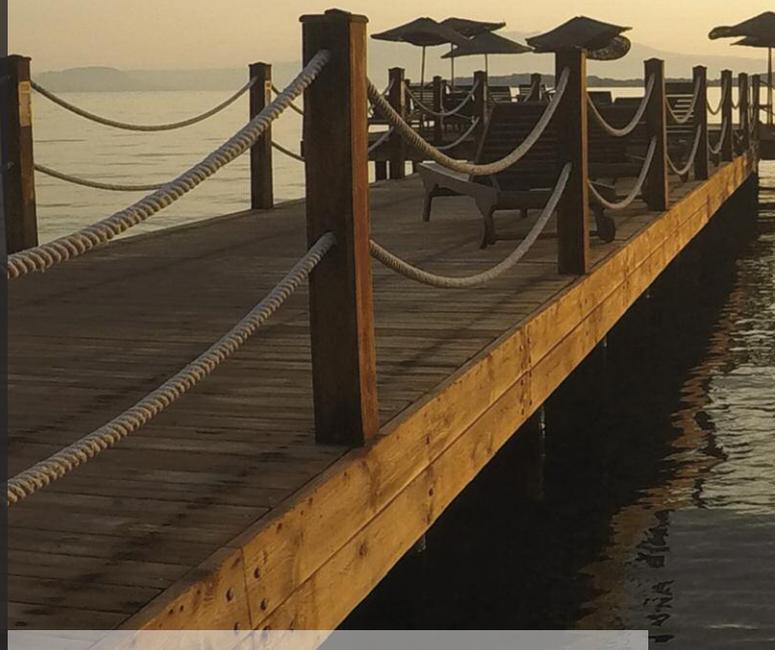
Kit

It's been a long time since we travelled with windsurf kit on a plane now for two reasons. The airlines have got smarter and want more dollar to put your pride and joy onboard. My charm offensive with the check in girl isn't quite what it once was 15 years back! The pain doesn't end there though. Once landed you need to then get it from airport to hotel, then hotel to centre, then rig it and find somewhere to store it – I'm exhausted even typing that! Where we have had a lot of fun taking windsurf kit with us, lately we have resorted to kite equipment as it is just so much easier to travel with. Hiring equipment is a winner every time for me especially if two weeks or less. I might rethink if somehow magically I scored Jeri for two months or Mauritius for the season but sadly work calls.

Alacati is blessed with several good centres all offering quality equipment and roughly around the same price. You take your pick and sign in for whatever period suits your plans. We saw JP, Pryde, Starboard, Severne, Fanatic, North and Point 7 well represented in the bay. We hired with ASPC (Alacati Surf Paradise Club) and they had a great package that allowed four days of hire in seven, plus insurance for 225 euros. This gets you gear from around 10am through till 7pm.

All the centres seemed to offer similar with freeride and slalom being the staple diet of riders on the water. Stock of boards was generous but there wasn't much under 95L. I put this down to the popularity of the

The board is then allocated to you allowing straps and such all to be tuned to your liking





slalom/blast scene. ASPC had three levels of equipment depending on the bulge of your wallet. The pro gear was good stuff with pro model JP boards and sails rigged on 100% masts. The staff were good, helpful and not over the top.

What was interesting is you select a board for the duration of the hire! We have been used to the pick and mix options of other centres and initially felt a little restricted by this. I lumped for 113 JP Super Sport and Louise a 96 FSW with double back straps, again another telltale sign of the ensuing week of the megablast. The board is then allocated to you allowing straps and such all to be tuned to your liking. I even saw some 'diligent' riders bringing their own fins from home – this was all very new for me. As our time wore on I began to like this board and even liked the system. I rode the board with a range of sail sizes and just got on with it. By the end of my four days hire I was pretty attached to it and all its straight line speediness. Don't let this put you off because if you want to ride something different the staff were super helpful and would figure out which board would be available for you to take out.

Sails were all rigged without booms. ASPC had a great range of sizes from 3-8.5m (some even smaller for petite people). The majority of the rigs are quality RAF with a handful of Cam induced sails. Throughout the week I had no problems getting the sail I wanted, with most of the time on one of their 'cammed' numbers. To get a sail just ask the staff and they take it out, attach boom and send you on your way. Spend five minutes getting your lines and height set and off you go. Simple.

On the water

The wind blows left to right for all the main centres. There is one smaller more local centre at the top of the bay that is on the other side – called 'Orsin'. The water was surprisingly chilly for early August. I may be getting soft with Middle East acclimatization but I stuck it out in shorts and rashie, meanwhile Louise was clad in rubber. It wasn't enough of a deterrent to not drop gybes though. The centre has wetsuits free to use if you need. A lot of the local sailors adorned shorties. Just a point to note.

All the centres adopt a lazy line system so you can tie your sail and board up and have a drink/chill/eat and then head back out an hour later. This was kind of new to us again but was really quite simple and convenient!

The first 200m of the bay where the centres are is shallow. This makes it great for all the practicing of moves and the comfort of standing up. Even with my midget stature I was good for standing up.





One thing I think that makes this place over other locations is the ability to smash it over to the other side of and beach it. Reconfigure, chat, rest and blast back again. As a 'lad' I always wanted my dad to take me to a loch just so I could do this very exercise. I couldn't turn my Tiga Speed 320 so in my eyes this was perfect solution. Fast forward 25 years and I can turn, but there is something nice about landing on the other side. It allows you to make those nippy adjustments, boast to your mates about just how fast you were going, and then race back! The bay has numerous navigation markers that feed the up wind marina. These can make for fun turning marks. These two reasons alone coupled with steady wind and flatish water are probably why slalom rules the roost here!

I won't lie, I got my arse handed to me by 14-year old kids, old men and girls of all ages. I wouldn't say I was slow but some of the local sailors and those who use the bay for training are scary quick.



VERDICT

Would I return? Yes, most definitely! It was a great trip with lots to offer. A bit of you might want waves, or even more wind, but it was fun – a lot of fun. The centres are slick, the people are friendly and the surroundings well worth exploring. Going as a group would up the game a little as you can literally hack it back and forth all day long chasing your mates or if the mood takes you crank it upwind for butter flat epicness and a gun run home.

On many occasions we made our way up to the top of the bay where there was a stand alone centre come club on the other side of the bay. In the early afternoons sailors of all shapes and sizes would meet and 'mega blasting' would commence. Sitting on the fringes I joined in but they were PDQ (Pretty Damn Quick). This all made for great fun and indulgence in an area of windsurfing I hadn't really dabbled in. It is a great laugh and pushes your limits... just differently.

The final thing to say about sailing in the bay was just how many beginners, children and girls were windsurfing. Although none of this should be a surprise I would estimate that 60% of the sailors were female. If this was to do with the week fair enough but all in all I thought what I saw was very encouraging for a sport that I cherish a lot.

Kitesurfing

Sorry but I have to mention it! The Middle East isn't the windiest spot in the world and to keep our 'brine time' up, we have been learning to kite. This reason coupled with the ease of travel ability, we came to Alacati armed with our kite kit.

It definitely felt like the poor brother of windsurfing but if you're competent then this is a good

option to match up with windsurfing. It can be hard to find places that offer both kiting and windsurfing. If you are a newbie, the lessons looked good and controlled with top instructors. The only group it probably isn't for is those who are up and running but not super confident with upwind work.

Out and about

ASPC itself has a well stocked bar along with a good restaurant serving a variety of food. There were a couple of other restaurants tucking in behind and around the other centres so you can take your pick.

The entire peninsula is worth exploration with Cesme offering the same style as Alacati but on a bigger scale. Just off the coast of Cesme is the Greek island of Chiros. Some say that this closeness has given the area a unique Turkish/Greeky feeling. Day trips and charters in and around the island are possible making a novel 'no wind' alternative. We had a 'scooter' (70TL) and utilizing the mandar (the internal radar belonging only to men – can be intermittent!) We found quiet bays to swim in followed by freshly caught calamari and freezing cold Effes. The area in and around Alacati/Cesme had a good feel to it and it is a popular holiday home destination for residents of nearby Izmir.



The final thing to say about sailing in the bay was just how many beginners, children and girls were windsurfing





WINDSURFING PARADISE IN **ALACATI** WINDWISE STYLE!

WORDS & PICS:

SIMON BORNHOFT/WINDWISE

SHALLOW, SAFE, TURQUOISE WATER, IDYLIC SKILLS TRAINING MORNINGS, BREATHTAKING AFTERNOON BLASTING, APRÈS SAIL EFES BEER, COBBLED STREETS, FRESH MEZE AND ONE OF OUR FAVOURITE RESTAURANT'S IN THE WORLD!... IT HAS TO BE WINDWISE IN ALACATI. Simon Bornhoft explains why he and his Windwise clients have been enjoying Alacati for over 16 years.

Alacati (actually pronounced 'Ala chata') is on the south western coast of Turkey and is one of the world's top windsurf locations thanks to its huge shallow protected bay and summer Meltemi wind scudding you across the glistening Aegean waters. For beginners just starting out, freeriders crafting their corners and practicing PWA pros Alaçatı satisfies every level of windsurfer. So here's why we go and why you should join us too...

The windsurfing

Super easy side-shore winds, shallow flat crystal clear water and soft, safe sand under foot. No nasty chop or hazards, just pure unadulterated windsurfing, making it one of our most popular Windwise destinations for improving skills. Unlike so many European destinations, it's the shallow water and side shore wind that makes all the difference to your progression, and energy levels, especially for those trying to grasp waterstarts or improving gybe success and consistency.

The centre

The windsurfing centre is aptly named Alacati Surf Paradise Club (ASPC) and sports some of the best facilities of any location I've been to. Not only really great staff and a plethora of kit to ensure a board and sail to suit every aspiration, but hot showers, modern



changing facilities, chill out area, volley ball, outdoor gym, table football, kids play area, yoga and Pilates. Plus there's a contemporary café and cool little beach bar-restaurant a fins throw from the water serving delicious stone baked pizzas.

Non-windsurfers love it

There's a private sheltered comfortable viewing area with beach loungers, huge bean bags, bar and café just a mast length from the beach. The ambience on the beach and the quaint market town of Alacati in the evenings safe is very welcoming and gives that real holiday feel. For the more adventurous there's Ephesus or Pamukkale for a cultural hit.

Après windsurfing

So yes, we have to admit, it's not just the windsurfing that has enticed the Windwise team back year on year - beautiful, unspoilt, cobbled streets and old stone architecture, bring Alacati alive at night, buzzing with friendly restaurants and chilled out bars. Everywhere we go, the chefs, owners and locals greet us with open arms and incredible Turkish food. Alacati is tucked well away from mass tourism – no English voices - you are truly immersing yourself where the cosmopolitan Turkish choose to holiday.

Why Windwise In Alacati?

Firstly, our Skills Training System covers all the Windwise Skills & Drills to improve every aspect of your windsurfing. We have coached literally thousands to enhance their level and be the best that they can be and Alacati creates a wonderful environment to achieve that.

During Windwise sessions we often run our Upwind-Downwinder experiences across and then up to the very top of the bay, multiplying tack and gybe attempts and then learning to sail downwind into the 'secret garden' of effortless fast broad reaching, which feels magical!

Secondly, not only do we take a dedicated approach to your progression, we also seek to give you experiences that few would ever find. For example we'll take you to a place that's pretty much private dining - I'm not allowed to say where it is. It is quite simply one of the most amazing places to eat that I've ever taken clients to. We also venture to a sunset picnic near a Roman Amphitheatre, which is only accessible by foot and only ever visited by a handful of locals.



WINDUK SURFING

Issue 5 October 17

FOILING #2

further adventures in flying

GIBSON IN FUERTE

Stephen Gibson profile

MELLON USAGE

Finn Mellon profile

THE TOURIST

Dan Newman's PWA experience

TURKISH DELIGHT

Alacati in focus

HOLIDAY WINDSURFING

with Mic Brignall

NEW! COLUMNS:

Davis & Davis (Zara & Pete)

Clare Elliot (Vass Diva)

+

REVIEWS:

RRD HARDCORE WAVE 88 & VOGUE PRO 5M (2018)

BUG FINS & FOILS FOIL SYSTEM

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28 PROFILE STEPHEN GIBSON



WORDS: STEPHEN GIBSON

PICS: AS CREDITED

STEPHEN GIBSON IS A LONG TIME WINDSURFER WHO MOVED TO SUNNIER CLIMES BACK IN THE 90S. NOW A PERMANENT FIXTURE OF FUERTEVENTURA'S WINDSURFING SCENE GIBBO STILL RIPS AND ENJOYS THE SPORT AS MUCH AS EVER. WE TAPPED MR G UP FOR A NATTER TO SEE HOW THINGS ARE THESE DAYS.

GIBSON'S WORLD

I started windsurfing back in 1981 on a semi-frozen diminutive lake in the north of England, and since that very first moment when I saw those little ripples appear at the nose of the board I have always been hooked. I guess windsurfing is a sport which is incredibly addictive due to the fact that it's always changing, always a challenge and one can never achieve perfection. I love the fact that it's so difficult.

My permanent move to Fuerteventura was a bit of an accident really. I left England in '95 to come to the Canaries to train for six months to prepare myself for the British Wavesailing Championships in Tiree and when those six months had run their course I simply never went back. Why would I? I was living the dream. 24 years old, every day on the beach, wandering around in boardies and no shoes and windsurfing every day.

Why would I want to come back to England? Twenty-two years on and it's still a dream. Before I left the UK I used to love our annual jaunts to Tiree and to me Fuerteventura is the same - windy, with a beach for every wind direction and super laid-back. But without winter jackets. I've ended up in tropical Tiree, haha.



'One more run'

Even after all these years of sailing hard every day I still get a rush from a good session. Jumping is my favourite discipline and on a good, windy day with any type of ramp I still have that 'one more run' thought about 50 times over, as we all do. Getting to work on time has been a real issue for me over the past 22 years!

I love learning manoeuvres. As a youngster I was heavily into BMX and I think it probably stems from that. I enjoy breaking down moves into their separate components and then learning them step by step, it's the greatest buzz in the world when you bust out that new trick for the first time after a thousand (and more) fails, nothing can beat that feeling. I guess this has helped me with my coaching as I find it quite easy to explain technique to people, having already dismantled the move for myself. Before I came to Fuerte I competed on the British circuit in slalom, course racing and waves and loved them all, but I always enjoyed a good day on my wave board more than anything and that's why I ended up where I did.

Wild card entry

I've had so many great sessions over the years here that it's difficult to name one in particular as my best. The day I landed my first forward at Flag Beach, first flaka (after almost 14 months of crashing head first into my mast) or some of my sessions sailing the amazing wave at Lobos, a little island just off the coast of Fuerte with a perfect little reef break which works a couple of times a year if we're lucky. But I would say my most memorable day was when I won the wild card



for the PWA Fuerteventura freestyle, coming from last place on the first day (I had to leave before the second round to get back up north to my job in a hotel), to win four complete rounds on the last day (day off), not losing one single heat. That was some party when I got back to my friends in Corralejo!

Everyone can go through phases when they're less motivated than others, and I'm no exception. Normally for me it happens after a long stint of bad conditions or an injury. I quite easily get absorbed in other activities when not sailing and can sometimes find myself a little disinterested when the opportunity presents itself again. It only takes one good session to get rid of my apathy though, sometimes only one run. I think the secret is to wait until a good day appears, don't stress about getting back out there in whatever conditions



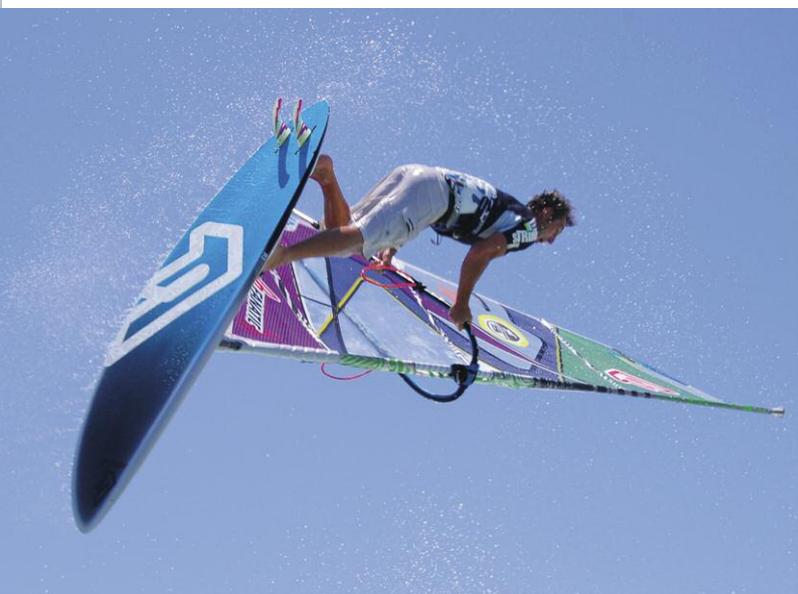
I have been out of action for most of the year really, having just returned to the water a couple of weeks ago.

come along as this can actually have the reverse effect sometimes – sail with zero expectations.

Injuries

I managed to go a good few years with only minor injuries (ah, the glory of youth), but over the past six or seven years they've been mounting up, perhaps unsurprisingly. Broken toes, broken fingers, broken teeth, torn ligaments, dislocated shoulder and four years ago a broken hip resulting in a hip replacement. Recently, after months of back problems, I found out I have four prolapsed discs in my lower back, which is going to be a little problematic I think. I have been out of action for most of the year really, having just returned to the water a couple of weeks ago. I'm having to supplement my sailing with core strengthening exercises and stretching, and it looks like this will form part of my daily regime forever now if I want to carry on sailing at a decent level.

I've always hated yoga and even more so gyms but it would appear that they will now turn out to be 'lifesavers' for me. If I had to do it all again though, I would do it all the same except for the fact that I would probably listen more to all the physios who have



32 PROFILE STEPHEN GIBSON

Definitely my favourite clinic is teaching forwards though. It's such a huge mental barrier to most people that it's a massive buzz for me when I help them actually achieve it.



treated me over the years and warned me that this day would come if I didn't start stretching and strengthening my core. Maybe a word of warning for all you thirty-something rippers out there who are still in the invincibility zone which I thought would last forever. Hindsight is a wonderful gift.

As a language teacher over here, working with kids, I have the luxury of sharing the same holidays as the locals, literally translated as 13 weeks in summer. Which just happens to be the windiest season. Purely coincidental of course! I run most of my clinics during this period as the winds are most consistent and, obviously, I'm not at work. Due to the conditions I concentrate mainly on intermediate and above in my clinics, whether it be gybing, tacking, general sea sailing or introduction to waves. You just need to be able to plane in the straps and there's a beach for you in Fuerte. Definitely my favourite clinic is teaching forwards though. It's such a huge mental barrier to most people that it's a massive buzz for me when I help them actually achieve it. I love it.

Fuerte Windsurf Clinics

I actually came up with the Fuerte Windsurf Clinics idea while I was laid up with my hip injury and wasn't sure if I would be able to sail properly again. I thought it would be a great way to carry on sailing without overly punishing my body trying to keep up with the pesky kids, meet people and also impart some of the knowledge I had accumulated over my many years in

the sport. In the end, I carried on punishing my body while running the clinics, hahaha! They've been a huge success and I've met so many great people through the clinics and surfaris, some of whom have become some of my best amigos.

As a team rider for Fanatic/North I am currently sailing all new kit for the 2018 season. Actually I have held onto my Fanatic 2017 90L Quad TE, which I love, because I only used it three times due to last year's injury shenanigans. That's my small board for up here as we generally sail on 4.5, 5.0/5.3, which also just happens to be my quiver of North Superheros for the coming season. I recently received my 2018 Fanatic 99L Stubby TE which is absolutely amazing! Previously I always had a freestyle board as my big board as they were so quick to plane and user-friendly in bump n jump conditions (even down-the-line wave sailing scenarios saw them get use).

Planing performance

But the Stubby is the board I've been looking for all these years, combining early planing characteristics of the freestyle boards with the responsiveness and slashy turns of a waveboard – kind of what we tried to achieve with the freestyle wave boards years ago but far better. I also replace my stock fins with Maui Ultra Fins on all my boards, thereby notably increasing the planing performance and manoeuvrability. I didn't really believe the hype



about these fins until a friend let me try some of his and I was instantly convinced. If you get the opportunity, try some.

I'm in a very fortunate situation with my present sponsors where I basically have the best kit on the market and all I have to do is go sailing. I don't have any pressure to compete unlike some of my peers over here, and as long as I'm on the beach, doing clinics, chatting to people then they're happy. I've sailed some rubbish over the years – stuff that breaks, shapes that don't work but I've finally found kit that I love sailing with and that's exactly what I'm doing.

Xenophobic ribbing

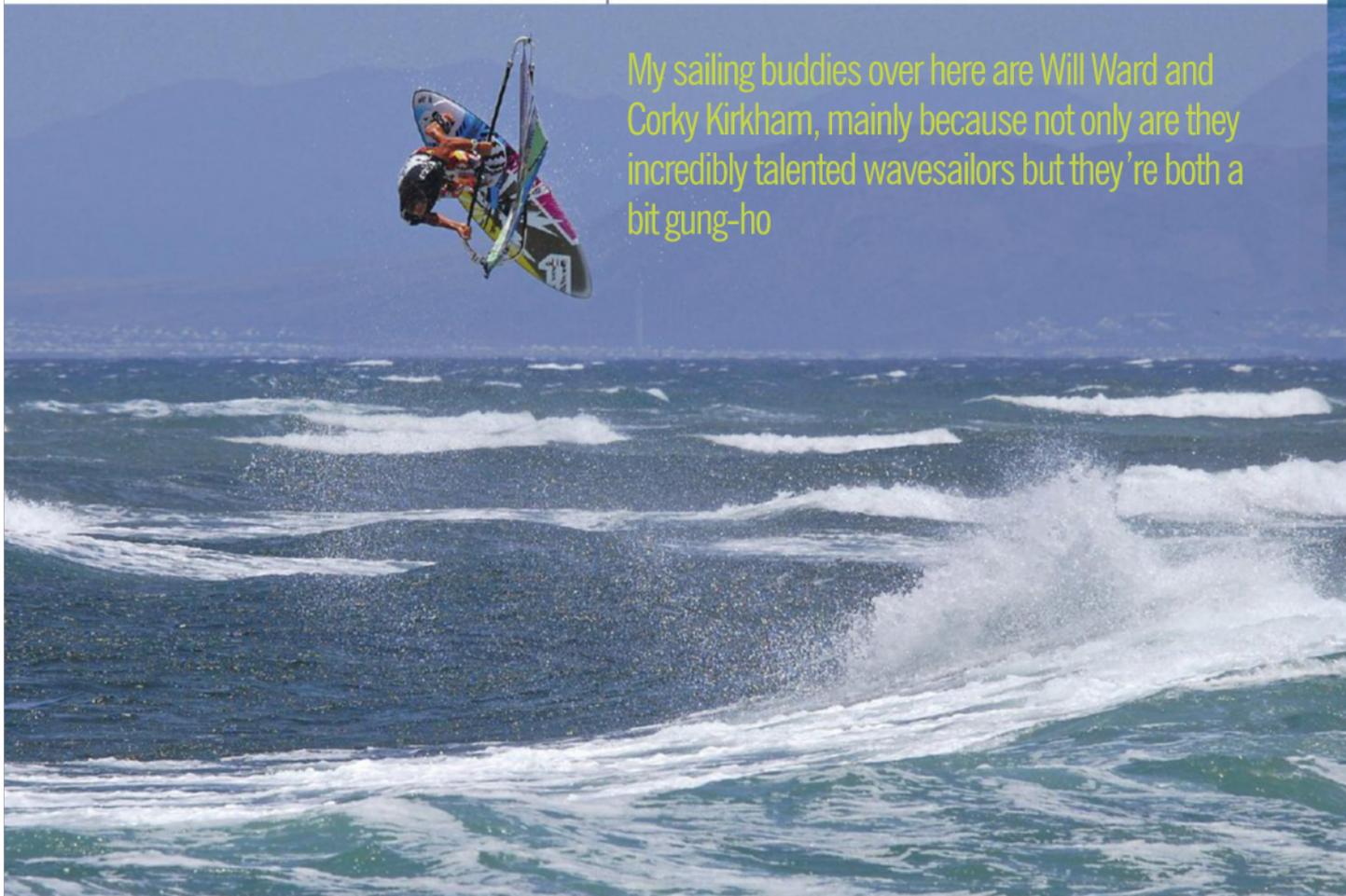
We have a good group of sailors over here and the level is pretty high, more so in riding than in jumping as we tend to get better waveriding and more diversity than the other Canary Islands. We all get on pretty well, wherever we're from, and try to keep the xenophobic ribbing down to a minimum on our WhatsApp groups, although it can get out of hand during international sporting events like the World Cup and in particular during penalty shoot-outs. My sailing buddies over here are Will Ward and Corky Kirkham, mainly because not only are they incredibly talented

wavesailors but they're both a bit gung-ho and good laughs are guaranteed when they're around.

Amazing sponsors

I'd like to thank all my amazing sponsors for the support over the years and especially so more recently, during my injury-strewn period. Nik Baker has been awesome. We used to compete against each other in the British Youth Championships way back in the day and he has looked after both myself and my partner Lucy Robson from day dot, enabling us both to carry on 'living the dream'. Thanks Nik! Also Timm from Maui Ultra Fins for providing me with board-changing fin technology. But, most importantly, I'd like to thank my dad, not only for introducing me to the sport which was destined to shape my life on that freezing northern lake all those years ago, but also for passing on his enthusiasm and passion for all things sport-related and helping me prioritise my life back in 1995 and nudge me onto the path I chose. I suppose I could also blame him for all the injuries I sustained along the way but I'm not the type of guy who holds grudges – love you pops!

I'd also like to thank Oakley and iger.com for keeping the sun out of my eyes and keeping me in cool beachwear.



My sailing buddies over here are Will Ward and Corky Kirkham, mainly because not only are they incredibly talented wavesailors but they're both a bit gung-ho

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REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL RRD'S MAUI PHOTOSHOOT 2017

WORDS: MATTEO GUAZZONI

PICS: RRD INTERNATIONAL/JOHN CARTER

IN RECENT YEARS, RRD PHOTOSHOOTS WERE MAINLY DONE IN SOUTH AFRICA. IN 2017 THE IDEA OF MOVING TO MAUI WAS ALREADY IN PLACE – JOHN SKYE AND ROBERTO WERE DISCUSSING IT FOR SOME TIME. MATTEO GUAZZONI, RRD INTERNATIONAL'S MARKETING AND TEAM MANAGER, TELLS US WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE THE ORGANISER/COORDINATOR OF SOMETHING LIKE THIS.



When I moved to RRD (December, 2016) I started to take care of the 'thing'.

Maui is an exceptional and perfect place for photoshoots. The colour of the water, the sky and the surrounding vegetation make each unique image high quality. Also the conditions are ideal. Ho'okipa is perfect for waves and Kanaha/Kihei are ideal for freeride. Everything is close to hand and you can arrange helicopters for aerial sessions easily, with flexibility around conditions.

We really have a great team and I'm glad to have had many of them in attendance. I hope in the future to bring those who could not come. For me it was also an opportunity to get to know everyone properly. Spending time in and around the water together is something special. Antoine Albeau, Arnon Dagan, Enrico Marotti, John Skye, Alex Mussolini, Tonky Frans, Jacopo Testa, Jem Hall, John Carter, Jace Panebianco and Dave White were among the riders, photographers and video makers.

Riders have to make the most of these gatherings. You must always be ready to go on the water, in any kind of conditions, and with any type of sail and board.

If you're the one organising, however, everything has to be planned well in advance. The list of things to do is long. It is necessary to plan, develop a programme, communicate this to riders, photographers and videomakers, define the budget, book flights and sort out the accommodation. Then, once shooting starts, it's about coordinating. Every day, with conditions in mind, you have to know how to adapt, always keeping in mind the general goal and what needs to be taken home. We were lucky with the conditions, it was simply a case of handling timings. I have to thank John Skye for helping me at every stage.

English vibe

Maui in March/April is overbooked. It was a mission to find a place to stay and we started looking a bit too late – I really had a struggle. Fortunately we found accommodation in the centre of Pa'ia. The house was our meeting point. We spent many long hours in it. With Dave White, John Carter and John Skye staying, there was a distinctly English vibe. So many jokes, laughter and cups of tea – we had some fun.



Every day, with conditions in mind, you have to know how to adapt, always keeping in mind the general goal and what needs to be taken home

Ideal conditions

The shoot itself went very well. As I said before we were lucky considering that the previous months were not particularly windy. We have always found ideal conditions for both freeride and wave during previous trips. In particular, Ho'okipa never let us drop a shot – every day waves were between 2.5m and 3m, it's a real windsurfing playground.

Our heli images are spectacular! We paid more attention to this because everything happens in a short time frame (one hour) and getting it wrong would mean throwing about 1000 € down the drain. You need to have a detailed plan with defined slots and share it with all riders. All equipment should be rigged on the beach and ready to use as you cannot miss a second. Everyone must know in advance exactly what to do minute by minute. The goal is to limit errors as much as possible.

Helicopter

We also had to decide when to call the helicopter and where to fly. Every spot has pros and cons. For example Kanaha is often too crowded and there is a risk of not getting free space. In the end we opted for Kihei (south shore), which wasn't as full.

Before the arrival of the helicopter I felt the same feeling as when I was preparing for a competition heat. I was thinking about the programme and I was hoping



everyone would have understood where they needed to be. Then, at the arrival of the helicopter, everything went by in a blur. During the middle part of the heli shoot one of our riders (who shall not be named!) did get it wrong, so we had to adapt. In the end though it was successful and amazing.

A classic rule

With all the main brands in Maui at the same time everyone is doing the same thing: getting prepared to present new products. These can all be seen on the beach, but everyone knows that images should not be leaked. Obviously this is the classic rule, which is often not respected. I happened to see on FB photos of new gear RRD that we had to remove.

Social media is a beast – information and images can spread like an oil slick. It's hard to keep on top of everything. Watching all day long via smart phone and checking every single post and comment is the only way. We do our best to handle RRD's brand image. The rule is always the same: to produce marketing material and show it only when the product is officially released. We have to be the first to showcase it.





New products

This year we decided on Maui because we have several new products. It was worth investing in this level of shooting because we have a new sail collection, the new Wave Cult v7, the X-Fire v10, the TwinTip v6, the Airwindsurf boards and our first windsurfing hydrofoil.

With regard to RRD's foil we have developed a first-class and high-tech product, lightweight (only 2.5 kg) with great rigidity. We have worked and invested so much because we really believe in developing foils. Our foil is designed for freeride use, perfect for both learners and those who already practice and want to improve quickly.

RRD'S Compact wave sail on the other hand is an absolute innovation. With this project we've made huge steps forward revolving around transporting windsurfing equipment. We offer a package of three folding sails and a removable mast, boom and extension, all enclosed in a backpack weighing less

than 20kg. The size of the backpack is that of a suitcase and can therefore be checked as standard luggage during overseas trips. Most convincing is the performance: we have been able to develop a rig comparable to standard ones. Alex Mussolini, for example, was amazed during his first try outs. This is a wave sail without any compromise!

Another level

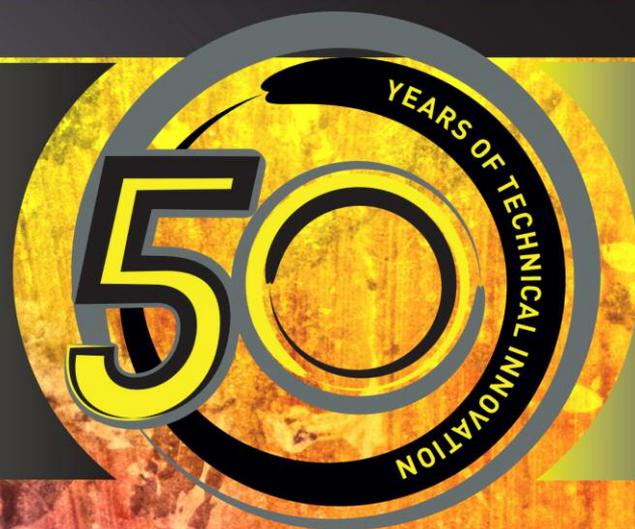
I know how it works to participate in a photoshoot, but organizing and coordinating is just another level! I simply faced one thing at a time by being methodical. I made lists and tried to follow the programme as much as possible. I was very lucky with the conditions and this helped to manage timings and coordinate the team. It has been a major learning experience, but I think in time my confidence will improve. In general I am very happy because we produced what we needed and this is the most important thing to take in consideration.





GUL RIDER SIMON BORNHOFT

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WORDS: BEN PAGE

PICS: JAN BOWDEN, LUKE RAISTRICK, STEFAN HILDER

FOR MANY WINDSURFERS WINTER MEANS A TRAINING TRIP TO AN EXOTIC LOCATION SUCH AS SOUTH AFRICA OR MAUI. BUT WHAT OF THE UK IN WINTER? IT'S NO SECRET THAT THE WINTER MONTHS ARE OUR WILDEST IN TERMS OF WEATHER, WITH THE SOUTH WEST OF ENGLAND BEARING THE BRUNT OF MANY AN ATLANTIC STORM. The winter of 2016/17 presented an opportunity for me to move to Devon. I took a year out from my medical degree to study for a BSC in sport science at Exeter University. This cunning postponement of my impending adulthood put me in prime location to make the most of what the winter in the South West had to offer.

While Exeter is not on the doorstep of any quality wave spots, it is centrally located to give day trip access to all of Devon and Cornwall. An hour gets you to Bigbury, an extra thirty minutes reaches the North Devon coast and an hour and 45 minutes gets you to the Ho'okipa of UK windsurfing; Gwithian. Distances are great so fuel costs can be high, but with my enthusiasm for dodgy car camping I stretched out each beach trip to the max so I could get as much water time as possible from each trip to the fuel pumps.

Variety of conditions

One of the fantastic things about windsurfing on a peninsula is that wind comes from all directions, and it's always good somewhere. The variety of conditions on offer in Devon and Cornwall is staggering, no two days are the same, and with so many different spots to choose from there is no chance of getting bored. There were weeks where I sailed cross off, logo high port tack on the north coast one day, surfed head high glass the next and then went to the south coast for a nuking jumping session. All this with some incredibly scenic backdrops, few crowds and, because it was winter, free parking!

In a whole winter there were a few sessions that really stuck in my head. Many were at Gwithian, its reputation really does precede it and it's not hard to see why. Among many special times afloat though, there was one day in particular that I remember most. The forecast was incredibly borderline and I mostly went to the beach to see my friend Charlie Gilman. We rigged anyway and headed out for what looked like two-foot waves. As we hit the water, something happened, I don't know if it was the tide, or a swell change or what, but it suddenly quadrupled in size to completely hollow, logo high perfection.

SLEEPING IN CARS

WINDSURFING AS A STUDENT IN THE SW



Winning the lottery

It was brief, a little over an hour of punting aerials off the heaving dumpers before the wind swung bolt offshore and it was all over. Each time we drive to the beach to go windsurfing, we are, in effect, gambling. I think that's why it is so euphorically rewarding when you score that special session. It is literally like winning the lottery and that day left Charlie and I giggling like schoolgirls. Maybe it is this gambling element that makes windsurfing so addictive, combined with the incredible adrenaline rush we all feel, it certainly makes for an intoxicating combination. I think in reality, we're all just junkies chasing the high. This is why I almost always end up making that drive to the beach, because you can't win the lottery if you don't buy a ticket.

It's always a great feeling when you figure out a new spot. I'd heard many things about Bigbury, the terms 'gusty', 'frustrating' and 'Bigbury rage' tended to feature heavily. This didn't exactly raise my expectations. Fortunately I'm rarely one to listen to the pessimists, and instead listened to my biggest windsurfing inspiration, my dad. He was full of praise for the place after spending a lot of time there back in the 80s when wave sailing was still in its infancy. I figured if he managed to have fun with a batten free, cloth sail and a board with the mast track six inches from the nose, then there must be more to it than this alleged gusty hell. As much as many of us may not like



to admit it, dads are usually right about most things. Fortunately for me, this time was no exception. It didn't happen immediately, I had a few skunkings and disappointments before I caught the golden forecast. But then nothing worth doing goes right the first time.

High and low tides

As it turned out the stars align when the wind goes WNW. Cross shore starboard tack conditions are a particular favourite of mine and that is probably why I loved it so much. High tide is great for jumping, with ramps lining up in the river mouth under the cliffs. Low tide makes the waves rather dumpy and huge fun for a bit of high stakes waveriding. 'Hit it before it hits you' is a good mantra for low tide at Bigbury.

February was the month when the place really came alive. There was a two week period where I sailed there almost every other day. Dashing down after lectures, never more than five people on the water and sometimes totally alone, it was brilliant. Albeit somewhat chilly. Bigbury is certainly a beach with its quirks. Rogue waves out in the middle of the bay, twice the size of everything else, help keep you on your toes. There is no real out back safe zone like there is at



most spots. You think you're in the clear and then the entire horizon rises up into a giant, grey, growling monster and you have to decide if you're brave enough to try and climb it. A solid chicken gybe is a valuable talent for a bigger day at Bigbury. It's always satisfying when you score a new spot, but this was especially rewarding thanks to the significance of the place to my dad. The bay is also breathtakingly beautiful, and for me it's often these little extra things that turn a good spot into a truly great one.

So what did I learn in my year in the South West? I learnt that camping and windsurfing in the winter can actually be a good combination. Although evenings are seriously boring if you're sitting in a car in the pouring rain. Boring enough in fact to make me revise, and as

it turns out, I did somehow learn enough sport science to pass my exams. However this is perhaps not a tactic I feel I should encourage.

Cooking and sleeping

I learnt that you definitely don't need a van to camp and windsurf. I discovered that it is in fact possible to cook and sleep in a Ford Focus. Although again it's not something I can wholeheartedly recommend, as its death and subsequent borrowing of my girlfriend's camper converted Land Rover did make my life much easier. I learnt that if you've slept in a car it is possible to be so cold that putting on a wet wetsuit actually warms you up. And finally, I learnt that yes, the South West definitely is best.



FINDING THE RIGHT COURSE FOR YOU

AND THE WINDSURFING YOU DO



WORDS: SAM ROSS

PICS: RYA

WHETHER YOU ARE JUST STARTING OUT YOURSELF, LOOKING TO INTRODUCE A FRIEND, WANT TO GET OVER A PLATEAU, OR WOULD LIKE TO GAIN SOME INDEPENDENCE THERE'S A COURSE FOR YOU, SAYS RYA WINDSURFING TRAINER SAM ROSS.

To succeed in any sport, practice makes perfect, but there's nothing wrong with getting a leg-up here and there. That's where professional training comes in.

Perhaps you want to perfect your planing technique or maybe you would like to know how to gybe? Or perhaps windsurfing is just an idea germinating in the back of your mind? Either way, some expert training will make it a breeze, giving you the confidence to progress on your own.

Here are options on offer from the RYA's leading windsurfing training programme, widely available in the UK and abroad.

Starting out

If you're a first timer you only need willing and a small amount of time. The RYA Start Windsurfing course introduces you to the sport's basics and requires no prior experience or equipment. In just a few hours you could be up and windsurfing. And you'll be a confident and competent windsurfer in lighter breezes in a couple of days.

If you're time poor, then many training centres can run this in short sessions over a few weeks. One-to-one sessions will get to you on the right footing faster. This course will enable you to sail where you want, set up your kit and launch and land safely. It will also provide a good understanding of where to go next.

What kit do I need to continue?

The clothing: Don't worry if you haven't got any kit. Wetsuits are available at RYA centres. However, if you are looking to get your own suit, a good summer wetsuit can cost less than £100 and is your ideal first equipment purchase.

The board: As with wetsuits, the centre you choose to learn from will provide all the equipment you need. Once you have the basic skills there are a proliferation of options available to help you progress your newly learnt skills. Full boards and rigs can also be hired at your centre.

Moving up a level

For those that have been through the RYA Start Windsurfing course, or have the basics of windsurfing, then the Intermediate course would be next.



By building on your basic skills, a course will help you improve by teaching you more advanced techniques. It's also the start of your journey as a truly independent windsurfer. This course also starts to guide you in analysing your own sailing techniques and skill fundamentals.

The RYA Intermediate course introduces skills such as improved stance and harness technique. It looks at fast tacking in stronger winds and getting the board going. Once confident, the instructor will then build on these skills introducing you to the foot straps, making the most from windy conditions and upping the exhilaration gear, enabling you to experience the thrill of fully blasting across the water.

As with the RYA Start Windsurfing course, the RYA Intermediate course is accessible via a number of different routes. You can sign up to a course spread over a few days or a weekend, or you can book in lots of short coaching sessions stretched over a longer period of time, over evenings or mornings/afternoons. This will give you the time to develop skills in a wider variety of conditions.

If it's one specific skill you are looking to master or hone, there are often one on one sessions available at RYA Intermediate windsurfing centres.



As with the RYA Start Windsurfing course, the RYA Intermediate course is accessible via a number of different routes

From a kit point of view, setup is key at this level. Having mastered the basic skills of windsurfing, you'll want to move onto boards without dagger boards. Your instructor will help you with this transition to ensure your equipment setup is right, such as footstrap size, position and setup, along with fin size and UJ placement, tuning harness lines, boom height and rig, all making the best of the conditions and assisting your learning.

Tuning up and taking off

If you've mastered blasting in both straps and want to push into different water states on smaller boards in mixed conditions then the RYA Advanced Course is the next step.

As with the intermediate course this can be run over short periods but most likely several sessions over a longer period of time to help develop skills. Refining stance and blasting technique to suit a wider variety of conditions and kit as well as looking at tacking at high speed in stronger winds, waterstarting and the infamous carve gybe.

Once you have mastered all the advanced core skills, instructors can take you through the techniques of jumping and advanced carving skills, adding some kudos to advanced sailors' repertoires.

What kit do I need to continue?

As previously mentioned, an RYA centre will provide all equipment needed, especially the boards and rig. However as you reach an intermediate and advanced stage, it would be well worth investing in your own harness and wetsuit. If you go for a thicker wetsuit around 5/3 mm then this can see you making the most of conditions throughout the year.

As a plus for RYA members, discounted suits and accessories are available from some top brands via the RYA's member reward partners such as Wetsuit Centre, as well as third party windsurfing insurance.

Many RYA centres offer intermediate and advanced level gym-style memberships offering access to a wide range of the latest gear.

They will also be best positioned to advice you or buying your own kit which will give you full independence.

Where do I go from here?

Visit www.rya.org.uk/wheresmynearest/Pages/Directory.aspx#list/ to find your nearest centre. For more info on courses visit www.rya.org.uk/courses-training/courses/windsurfing/Pages/hub.aspx

HOLIDAY WINDSURFING LET'S BRING IT BACK HOME

WORDS: MIC BRIGNALL

PICS: LAWRENCE SINCLAIR, ANDREA SONCINI

SKATEBOARDING, SURFING, SNOWBOARDING: THESE SPORTS ALL HAVE SOMETHING IN COMMON (AND IT'S NOT JUST THE LETTER S!) SUPPOSEDLY THEIR HEYDAY HAS BEEN AND GONE – SOME SAY THE SAME AS WINDSURFING. IT'S A SAD THOUGHT, BUT NOT NECESSARILY TRUE. When it comes to windsurfing the sport's more accessible than ever! There might not be a set up in every other household but the amount of centres overseas is truly staggering – Vassiliki, Greece, has five centres alone, and Lake Garda, Italy, also has five!

That tells you something. It could even be argued, based on some reports, that more people are trying windsurfing than before, but fewer are bringing it home to UK waters (maybe). The perception is windsurfing is a wholly inconvenient sport, yet it doesn't need to be. These days there's plenty more ways to windsurf than simply rigging up a big sail and board.

An introduction to myself though: I have been windsurfing for 14 years now, beginning in Scotland. My parents wanted to find an activity that we could all do together, as I refused to go on walks or ride a bike. So, they decided that we would all take up sailing; being the annoying brat I was, I wanted to windsurf instead. Fast forward a few years, several Neilson holidays later, and practice at the sailing club (I admit, I used to sail as well), I was 14 and happily planing in the footstraps on an 8.5m - something not many kids my age could do. Sadly, life got in the way and I began competitively kayaking. My windsurfing became limited to one or two weeks a year during trips.



Teaching with Neilson

The next stage of my windsurfing came in 2013 when I earned my RYA Windsurf Instructor qualification. The year after, when I was 18, I worked at a nearby school teaching sailing, windsurfing and other assorted sports. Soon after I began teaching with Neilson, and have been ever since. Through this experience I have seen the issues of holiday windsurfing, attempted to find ways around it, but most importantly found my love for the sport. Every little move is an achievement, something to be proud of.

Windsurfing can take you around the world, but domestic windsurfing in UK waters is tricky, or at least perceived to be. The water isn't as balmy as the Med, wind is driven by low pressure systems as opposed to Trade or thermals, and brand new off the shelf kit isn't cheap!

The very first thing needed to windsurf, before anything, is find somewhere to do it. A perfect location should be local, with breeze. A few extra amenities is always nice but not essential. Many go abroad to get this perfect set up: soft sand, warm water and kit already rigged on the beach! Life doesn't get much easier. The Aegean Sea has the Meltemi to provide great breeze, Sardinia has the Mistral, Vass has 'Eric', The Canary Islands have their own unique winds and so on.

Lochs and lakes

The UK has no lack of good - even great - spots though. A quick Google search usually finds somewhere to windsurf; many places already have windsurf clubs. We all know it's more fun to windsurf with other people, so why not investigate? It's a great way to learn too! Sometimes it can take experimentation; my local spot in Edinburgh is a tiny loch, only 5ft deep. It's perfect for learning new moves, and as it's surrounded by land. If anything goes wrong then it's only a short swim in! Lochs and lakes are available to explore, it could become your personal spot (but always be willing to share, not necessarily just with other windsurfers...). Windsurfing doesn't have to be confined to coastal locations.

The other thing that may be off-putting is the UK's climate. Sadly, there's not a lot to be done about the actual temperature of the air and water during off seasons. Wetsuits are great at keeping you warm and technology has greatly improved. It's now not unusual to be hot in rubber even when air temps are low. Sure, neoprene is not as cool as boardshorts but then needs must. A well fitted wetsuit will keep your body heat in, and you can get extra thick steamers with hoods for those particularly cold winter days. When the right gear is available, there's no excuse not to be out and before long it'll be all smiles.



In an ideal world, we'd all have jobs that we can do whenever. I read about a group of guys based near Rutland Water who are all electricians, plumbers and similar. These guys work hard, but when the wind comes they have nothing to stop them jumping in their vans and heading to the lake. If we were all in the



same boat the world wouldn't work and no windsurf boards would ever be made, so that's not possible... It does take a number of stars to align to allow a full power windsurf session. Some of these are controllable, others are not.

Plan the weekend accordingly

Firstly, it needs to be windy. We can't make it windy, but we can up our chances. I'm not going to recommend moving house and uprooting the family simply for windsurfing, but beginning in a good location always helps! Secondly, it's wise to know when it's going to be windy, and this is the job of weather forecasting sites, such as Windguru. Everybody has multiple commitments, but if it's going to be blowing 30 knots on Saturday morning, work around it if you can. Plan the weekend accordingly. Should you be blessed with kids, it can be a nice family outing to the beach. Depending on their age, get them out with you on light wind days this way you may be forgiven when it does get windy and disappear. And have a back up plan. Stand up paddle boards these days are session savers if supplied with rig attachments. Light air riding shouldn't be sniffed at as it can help with developing skills as well as getting you afloat.

fitting short sessions

Of course, Sod's Law says that it'll actually be blowing on Wednesday afternoon. It's still possible to get an after work session in, depending on your work hours and daylight. Pack the car with your kit before work, and head on over straight after. It's easy not to commit but the skill is fitting short sessions in often (this I can totally agree with and recommend – ed). Rather than waiting for the perfect day, which can take months, head out whenever you have a spare couple of hours and the forecast is positive.



Going out in light winds is a great way to practice high-wind moves and flowstyle (light wind freestyle) is a skill in its own right. And with things like foiling becoming ever more accessible the lighter wind part of windsurfing is set to be revolutionised.

Now for the delicate part – money

Just like any sport windsurfing isn't cheap. All hobbies cost though and once the upfront cost is dealt with windsurfing can be reasonably inexpensive. Think of it like a gym membership. Instead of pumping pounds into pushing weights around re-direct it towards windsurfing gear as after all it's better to be outdoors than stuck inside, surely?

All sports have hype about why the latest equipment is the best. It's the same with windsurfing. If you're just getting into windsurfing, or haven't had much practice, older kit is no issue at all. You don't have to hand over a year's worth of mortgage payments to get afloat. Secondhand gear is perfectly fine to use. Check out eBay and quality retailers like Boardwise in the Midlands who do a great line in used quality kit.

Windless days

Unfortunately no matter how much equipment you own there's a chance of getting skunked – at least in terms of scoring planing conditions. As we said before have a plan B. Get hold of an inflatable SUP for windless days. Make sure it has a mast insert for windSUP action. Basically anything to get you wet. Holiday windsurfing is great, and I can't recommend a windsurfing trip enough, but ultimately to really scratch that itch and also improve you need to be sailing as regularly as possible.

Windsurfing in the UK is changing and no longer should it be thought of as cumbersome or inaccessible outside of overseas resorts and teaching establishments. There are so many products and ways to help fulfil your windsurfing dreams. The key is not getting fixated on any one type of sailing (waves, slalom) and instead embrace the opportunity of being on the water. You'll be glad you did!

Alternative windsurfing kit to get you afloat whatever Mother Nature's mood –

Arrows Inflatables iRig (S, M, L) – inflatable windsurf rig that (REALLY) works in super low winds. Plug into your SUP (inflatable or rigid) or conventional big freeride board and enjoy some light wind fun. Also great for initial forays into windsurfing.

Inflatable SUPs – many inflatable SUPs (especially those from the bigger windsurf/stand up paddle brands) offer blow ups with rig attachments. Get involved and get cruising when it's too breezy to paddle.

Inflatable windsurf boards (planing) and compact rigs – we're seeing more of these products appear from major brands. Having a fully functioning planing windsurf board, but in inflatable form, with foldable compact rig could be one way to own bigger cumbersome kit.

Foils – yes, we appreciate foiling gear is another pricey bit of kit. But opening up the sub-15 knot wind barrier and allowing sailors to do away with big rigs could deliver foiling as an actual cost saving piece of equipment in the long run. It's also a completely different sensation which may become addictive!

Longboards – longboard windsurf boards are still one of the most efficient pieces of gear for light airs. They're also available second hand for pretty cheap. Using this equipment for cruising is one thing but how about journeying from destination A to B? This is where the real magic of longboards lies.

As we said before have a plan B. Get hold of an inflatable SUP for windless days. Make sure it has a mast insert for windSUP action. Basically anything to get you wet.



58 COMP PWA WORLD WAVE TOUR



LIVE AND DIRECT

PWA TENERIFE WINDSURFING ACTION IN THE FLESH!

WORDS: DAN NEWMAN
PICS: PENNY CHAPMAN
@SEAZTHEMOMENT
**GLOBETROTTING,
SEA FAIRING
WINDSURFER DAN
NEWMAN AND
GIRLFRIEND PENNY
WERE LOOKING FOR
SOME TIME OUT AWAY
FROM YACHTY DUTIES
DURING SUMMER
2017. DECIDING TO
HIT UP TENERIFE
THEY LUCKED OUT AS
THE PWA WOULD BE
IN TOWN AT THE
SAME TIME. HERE
DAN RECOUNTS HIS
EXPERIENCE OF
SEEING THE PROS
SHRED LIVE AND
DIRECT.**

Hungry for some high wind, wave action we figured that the Canaries would be the best place to spend a few weeks on our summer tour. Having spent plenty of time in El Medano, Tenerife, in the past it would be the perfect choice as it had never failed to deliver the goods! We then realised that the PWA were heading over for the second stage of the world wave tour, so it was a no brainer...

I've always been an avid follower of the PWA world tour and been especially inspired by the action on the wave circuit. Having the opportunity to see an event live and in person was extremely exciting. I can remember back in the day, when I was just a wee lad, thumbing my way through the windsurfing magazines each month, admiring pictures of the action and then waiting eagerly for the latest tour video to be released, to actually see the footage.

Nowadays it is far easier to keep up to date with all of the events online. The live coverage on the PWA website itself is superb and the commentary delivered by Ben Profit really makes it. If you've not yet tuned in then you really must as it is extremely entertaining. They have also introduced live results and score sheets on the video feed so you can keep track, wave by wave, jump by jump, making sofa spectating or sneaking a peak of the action on your phone while you're supposed to be working, very easy.

60COMP PWA WORLD WAVE TOUR



We arrived on the island just ahead of the event, so headed directly to Cabezo to see what was going down. The event site was all set up and there was a buzz on the beach. Equipment covered literally every grain of sand and competitors were busy setting up and fine tuning their kit. With light winds for the first couple of days it made for a relaxed build up, but with plenty of wind and swell forecast for later in the week there was promise for a hot competition.

The event officially opened with the competitors marching through the town, led by a spectacular drum parade. They made their way from the event site to the main square where all the riders were introduced on stage. Being amongst the party atmosphere and seeing all of the sailors in the flesh was very cool. It was also really good to see such a strong group of UK riders out in force. We were especially excited to see how Adam Lewis followed up his impressive seventh place result at the previous event in Pozo. With so many big names and talented riders across both the men and women's fleets, the competition was set to be fierce.

From day three the wind fired up, Cabezo turned on and the action went off! Huge double forwards, back loops, wave 360s, goiters and every other wave move you can imagine were being thrown

everywhere. Cabezo offers a great natural arena for spectators to view the action straight from the beach, as a little added bonus it also gives some decent shelter from getting salt/sand blasted in the process and there's a beach bar too. The competition was getting extremely exciting and as the first full day came to a close we were already down to the top four competitors in both fleets. There were no surprises to see both Philip Koster and Victor Fernandez in the top four men along with local legend Alex Mussolini and also our man Adam Lewis, all still fighting for the top spot.

Epic single elimination final

The next day kicked off with ballistic winds – gusting over 50kts. With a decent swell building the conditions were set to challenge the riders for an epic single elimination final. They did not disappoint. You know it's seriously windy when the pros are going full power on 3.0ms! I mean, it was survival conditions for most but these guys were making it look easy and going huge in the process. Adam sailed heroically but was unlucky, missing out by only a couple of points against first Philip and then Victor in his heats. This did, however, put him in a very impressive and well deserved fourth place at the end of the single elimination.



Alex Mussolini

A stand out sailor for us was local ripper Alex Mussolini, who was on fire in his heat against Philip Koster. It was an extremely close-run final with Philip narrowly clinching victory to claim the top podium position.

In the women's fleet Sarah-Quita Offringa sailed a great heat to defeat Iballa Moreno and claim top spot in the single elevation. This was overshadowed by the fact that Daida (Iballa's twin sister) suffered a nasty injury to her ribs following a huge crashed back loop in her heat against Lina Erpenstein. She had already done enough to win but was unfortunately unable to sail in the final against Sarah.

The conditions continued to get better and better meaning the double elimination could get underway. The action was incredible and probably some of the best windsurfing I've ever witnessed. Marcillio Browne was a man on a mission and battled his way to challenge the podium taking down Adam Lewis. Alex Mussolini unfortunately slipped down into third after an extremely close heat against Victor Fernandez but no one was able to touch Philip Koster as he confidently held on to first place and was back sailing on his spectacular top form following his knee injury.

The women's fleet was filled with action and really fun to watch, with all the girls ripping! It finished with an

No one was able to touch Philip Koster as he confidently held on to first place and was back sailing on his spectacular top form



extremely close battle between Sarah and Iballa – Iballa taking first place, Sarah in second and Diada hanging on to third, even though she was unable to continue sailing due to injury.

Exceeded all expectations

Seeing the whole competition unravel live from the beach was awesome and the action fully exceeded all of my expectations. We also scored some great windsurfing outside of the event and being on the water, sailing with such talented riders around us was such an inspiring experience. El Medano certainly delivered the goods, yet again, from all angles. We'll be back again for sure. See you next time!



Learning to
windsurf in Langebaan,

SOUTH AFRICA

WORDS: JANINE AVERY

PHOTOS: PLANET WINDSURF HOLIDAYS
**WITH PRIME TIME SEASON IMMINENT
FOR THE TRUSTED WINTER
WINDSURFING GETAWAY OF SOUTH
AFRICA – IN PARTICULAR CAPE TOWN –
we hear from Janine Avery who tells of
her experience learning to windsurf in
one of the best UK off season
destinations you can find.**

Having sailed for most of my adult life, I am no stranger to the wind and the feeling of cutting through butter flat water with not a care in the world – at one with the elements, a salty sea breeze and the power of the sail at hand. Having departed the UK at school age for the sunny seas of Cape Town, it's no surprise that summer days for me were all about the ocean, a blustering South Easterly and a sail of some kind fluttering overhead.

On a recent trip up the West Coast of South Africa, I decided to swap my boat for a sail of a different kind to try my hand at learning to windsurf.



Ragged coastline

Langebaan, located just an hour and a half drive up the ragged coastline from Cape Town, is a favourite with locals for slow weekend escapes filled with sand and sea, and provides a great stop for travellers making their way up the coast to Namibia.

Luckily, for those who know of it, the tranquil Langebaan lagoon is often overlooked, or unheard of, by overseas tourists who flock to iconic Cape Town in the summer months.

But windsurfers be warned – missing out on this little South African gem would be a huge mistake!

The tranquil Langebaan lagoon provides an expanse of crystalline flat water, surrounded by a verdant national park and a quaint fisherman's village with amazing restaurants and vibrant bars and coffee shops. In the South African summer months between November and March, the wind blows a consistent 15-25 knots. Combined with warm weather and sunshine filled days, you have the perfect conditions for getting into the sport.

The centre in Langebaan is stocked with all the latest equipment and the buoyant beginner's board with its tiny centreboard made stabilising myself super simple

My dad, whose old windsurf board still sits in the garage of my childhood home, had warned me what a frustrating and tiring experience learning to windsurf had been for him and I was nervous to say the least. The first part of my introduction to the sport including learning about the wind direction and the angle of the sails – something we zoomed through pretty quickly considering my sailing background.

Trying aimlessly

Then it was on to the water. Having attempted to windsurf once, with no instruction, I knew that it was easy enough to get on the board, have the sail pulled up for me, and zoom off in one direction – but turning



around was another story altogether. Last time, this meant dropping the sail, trying aimlessly to manoeuvre the board in the direction I wished to head and then jumping on the board, only to fall off the other side and repeat the process again, until a kind rescuer in a speedboat arrived at the scene.

Good instruction

Well, what a difference good instruction and the right equipment can make! The centre in Langebaan is stocked with all the latest equipment and the buoyant beginner's board with its tiny centreboard made stabilising myself super simple.

The tiny sail, although probably laughable in size to people passing by, was heavier than I expected but pulling it out of the water and manoeuvring it for tacks and jibes was a process that took only a few tries to master. Soon I was up and riding, while around me other windsurfers mastered their tricks on the super flat water or surfed the waves a little further down the lagoon.

The water in the lagoon is fairly shallow, meaning my instructor was always within shouting distance if I fell off or forgot how to tack and the flat water and sheltered spot meant I could progress as quickly as my, now aching, body would let me. Already know what you are doing? Not to worry - the massive area does provide waves and more windy spots for more advanced sailors!

Amazing restaurants

When the day is done, Langebaan provides the perfect place to relax. The main street is lined with a variety of amazing restaurants and cocktail bars from where you can watch the action on the water or sip on a delicious glass of Cape Sauvignon Blanc while enjoying a meal of freshly caught fish. A number of wine farms, and even a craft brewery or two, can also be found in the local area.

Surrounding the Langebaan lagoon, the West Coast National Park is also waiting to be explored. You can hike, bike or drive through this unspoilt wilderness



area, keeping a keen eye out for eland, zebras and ostriches, or enjoy a picnic on the beach with the family. Alternatively a number of establishments offer archery, horse riding, game drives, golf, and boat trips so there is plenty to keep you occupied when you're not out on the water! Making Langebaan the perfect place to learn to windsurf and also to enjoy a fantastic holiday with the family!

Planet Windsurf Holidays

My learning to windsurf holiday to Langebaan, South Africa was planned by Planet Windsurf Holidays. As the windsurf holiday specialists the team at Planet provide expert advice on where to travel, and when, for the perfect windsurfing vacation.

They will organise everything from choosing the right location for your skill level and dates of travel, through to finding the right accommodation for your budget and booking the best equipment and lessons. You can also rest assured knowing that they have personally visited the destinations they work with and have hand picked the very best hotels and centres to ensure you enjoy a windsurf holiday like no other.

Visit them on www.planetwindsurfholidays.com or give them a call on +44(0) 1273 921 001 for more information.

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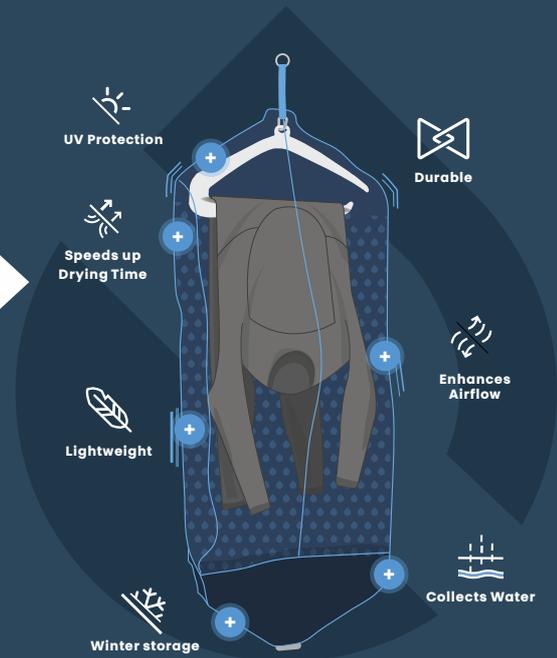
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70 COACHING WINDWISE TECHNIQUE



WARRIOR FEET

HOW TO 'SHIFT & SWITCH' DURING GYBES, TACKS & HELITACKS

YOU COULD BE AT THE APEX OF A CLATTERING GYBE, TEETERING HEAD TO WIND MID TACK OR HELI, WINDSURFING OFTEN REQUIRES US TO SWITCH THE FEET AT THE LEAST FAVOURABLE MOMENT. SIMON BORNHOFT EXPLAINS HOW TO GET YOUR WINDWISE FOOTWORK SYSTEM WORKING FOR YOU!

WORDS COPYRIGHT:
SIMON BORNHOFT
WINDWISE
PIX: PHOTOCLEAN

Shifting and switching

Changing your feet for Gybes, Tacks and Helicopter Tacks.

Who's it for?

Beginner to pro, we all need to keep practicing these skills!

Windwise core principles:

Vision and opposition

Core touch points:

Inside rail for gybing, mast base for tacking and helis.

Relevant to:

Next stage of Unhook Holding feature in February 2017 issue
Warrior Tack feature in July 2017 issue

We've all hesitated, stumbled or become unbalanced during a tack, gybe or helicopter tack. We can blame the wind, sail size or wrong wetsuit, but poor vision, no opposition and misplaced feet account for many a dismounts! This month's Windwise feature, 'Shifting and Switching', uses our Windwise Touch Point concept to train a more dependable foot change.



What exactly is shifting and switching?

Shifting and Switching a specific hip and foot movement to swap feet mid transition. It's easy to watch a gybe, but harder to identify which Touch Points and forces are being applied.

First, try this exercise. Stand with your weight evenly distributed on both feet. Look ahead, lean forward slightly and try to take your right foot off the floor – tricky? Now, try Warrior – 'touch' your chin on your left shoulder, look to the left, lean left and shift your left hip over your left foot, heavily flexing the left knee – should be easier to lift your right foot off the floor? Now imagine for a gybe levering the rig to the right (as in photos) and pulling down on a boom would enable you to exaggerate Warrior and help move the feet gybing at speed!



SHIFTING & SWITCHING TOUCH POINTS FOR GYBING

We've made big noises about the value of Windwise Touch Points and none more so your foot switch mid gybe.

System says, "In light winds, your front foot could be out of the strap just behind the mast base. But whenever possible, keep your front foot **IN** the front strap, even when off the plane!"

On land and water, say these out loud and 'feel' them!

"One - rear hand down the boom"

Clew hand down the boom, gradually pulling in and down towards your head, mast arm pushes out of the turn.

"Two - rear foot on rail"

This is a park lane, build all your hotels on it! Whether it's a planing or non-planing gybe - toes on the rail next to BACK strap. This guarantees carving and gives plenty of room to change the feet. Even in light winds, practice this to create the memory for stronger winds.

"Three - chin on shoulder and LOOK"

Chin near, or for training, actually touching the rear shoulder to guarantee you to look into and through out the turn!

On the next spread we go through the whole action!



WINDWISE 2018

Year of the 'Warrior'

SIMON BORNHOFT
COACH OF THE YEAR

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SHIFTING AND SWITCHING IN GYBING

GYBE SET UP

Unhook & hold on!



GYBE SET UP

Back foot across!



WARRIOR CARVING

& hip shift & foot switch



On a broad reach in controllable winds or close reach in over powered winds, set up 1,2,3...

Touch Point 1 = "Unhook, clew hand down boom"

Touch Point 2 = "Back foot on windward side, wait, then onto leeward rail – TOES NEXT TO REAR STRAP"

Touch Point 3 = "Sheet in and blast downwind."

Pic G1a. "Back foot out of strap, momentarily on the windward side"

Touch Point 1 = "Clew hand down boom"

Touch Point 2 = "Back foot slides over to leeward rail – TOES NEXT TO REAR STRAP"

Touch Point 3 = "Sheet in to bring sail close enough to touch the rear leg!"

G2a. "Toes right on the rail, very close to rear strap, DON'T BRING THE BODY RIGHT ACROSS YET"

Gradually lean over into an accentuated Warrior stance will engage the rail.

"Look" through the turn to where you want to go.

"Lean" the whole body in Warrior – head, hip over that flexed knee!

"Lever" the rig progressively out of the turn pulling in and down on the clew hand.

Pic G3a. Accentuate that clew hand Touch Point, by bringing the clew hand in towards the head and DOWN as the mast arm extends.

Getting these foundations right hugely increases your success rate.

WARRIOR CARVING & foot change



G4a

Rig Release



G5a

Sunken 7 Planing exit



G6a



Whilst maintaining that Warrior stance, looking and leaning over the flexed rear knee, the hips shift and drop, the old front foot slides out of the strap and switches heel first across the board – just after the dead downwind / apex of the gybe. Switch super quickly and right across to the rail. Whatever you do **DON'T** look at your feet.

Pic G4a. Switch that rear foot, by virtually knocking it out of the way, immediately stepping forward with the new front foot.

Place your new front foot on windward rail just behind mast base. Keep low and back.

Very Important Touch Point: Slide the old front hand right up to the boom.

Vision: Look out of that turn, chin **STILL** on what has become the front shoulder!

Touch Point: New front hand reaches underneath to grab boom between mast and harness line.

Pic G5a. If it didn't happen straight away, shuffle that rear heel close to the rail.



The secret is to **NOT** stand up (very common). Stay low, through a flexed rear knee and ankle after the foot change. **LOOK** forward, accentuate the 'Sunken 7' and whip the rig forward to sheet in as soon as possible!

Pic 6a. Exit on a broad reach for maximum speed and control, so feet early and rig earlier than you think to avoid rounding up!

Simple summary:

Practice in the garden, counting through each Touch Points!

1. Clew hand down the boom, gradually! Pulling in towards head, extending mast arm forward and out of turn.
2. Rear foot toes on rail.
3. Chin on 'rear' shoulder look through the turn.

Warrior Stance, pulling down on boom throughout.

Wide 'Sunken 7' to release, rotate and sheet in.

A lazy, short step with inboard feet and poor vision kills your gybes!



COMMON QUESTIONS

Q. Won't the tail sink with my back foot towards the tail?

A. It usually means the front arm is too flexed (no opposition), the rig's sheeted out or the rear leg is too straight.

Exception to the rule

Racers on very wide, parallel, hard railed board, put their rear foot further up the rail for laydown gybes and to engage sharper rails.

Q. When do I change my feet?

A. Ideally, fractionally after the dead downwind stage of the gybe. The faster you're going and the more you want to plane out, the earlier the foot change should be.

Q. When do I rotate the rig?

A. ALWAYS ON BROAD REACH after the foot switch and.....

If you're planing post Shift & Switch, rotate the rig within a split second of the new front foot hitting the deck.

If you've slowed down post switch, remain 'Clew First' (meaning, sail on a broad reach with the rig at 90 degrees to the board), settle and then rotate the sail.

SHIFTING & SWITCHING IN TACKING

Here's a close up view of the Foot Switch from last issue's Warrior Tack. It's virtually identical to the gybe, except the 'switch' happens behind rather than in front. As ever, practice on land and count loud the touch points!



Sail upwind, look briefly forward, rig back body forward.



Set Up & Touch Point Check First!

TP1. One – Front hand touching boom clamp.

TP2. Two – Front foot wraps right round and 'feels' the mast base.

TP3. Three – Head-Chin on REAR shoulder.



Footwork

Before moving, it's vital to bring the rear foot just in front of rear straps, with both feet pointing down the board, even if for a split second.



Shift & Switch Footwork

As the head turns, the feet and hands move together. When switching, knock the old front foot out of the way as you simultaneously push the mast the opposite way to the body with an extended front arm. Look at, pull or hug the rig, (very common) and you'll be getting wet.



Touch Point Re-check

TP1. Front hand transfers to new side, close to the boom clamp.

TP2. New front foot replaces the old front foot wrapped around the mast base. Feel the new front foot pointing forward, ideally touching the mast base. The new back foot takes a massive step back down the board.

TP3. Head-chin has become the new front shoulder - look forward!

Warrior exit: Super wide foot spread, head high, hips low, looking and leaning over a heavily flexed knee.



Straight 7 Ending

To finish, push out with the clew hand to turn the board downwind and sail away in a straight, upright 7. As ever, keep looking forward.

All too often, the front foot isn't wrapped around the mast base and the hips aren't turned DOWN the board before the switch. This is why everyone runs off the front or sinks the nose!

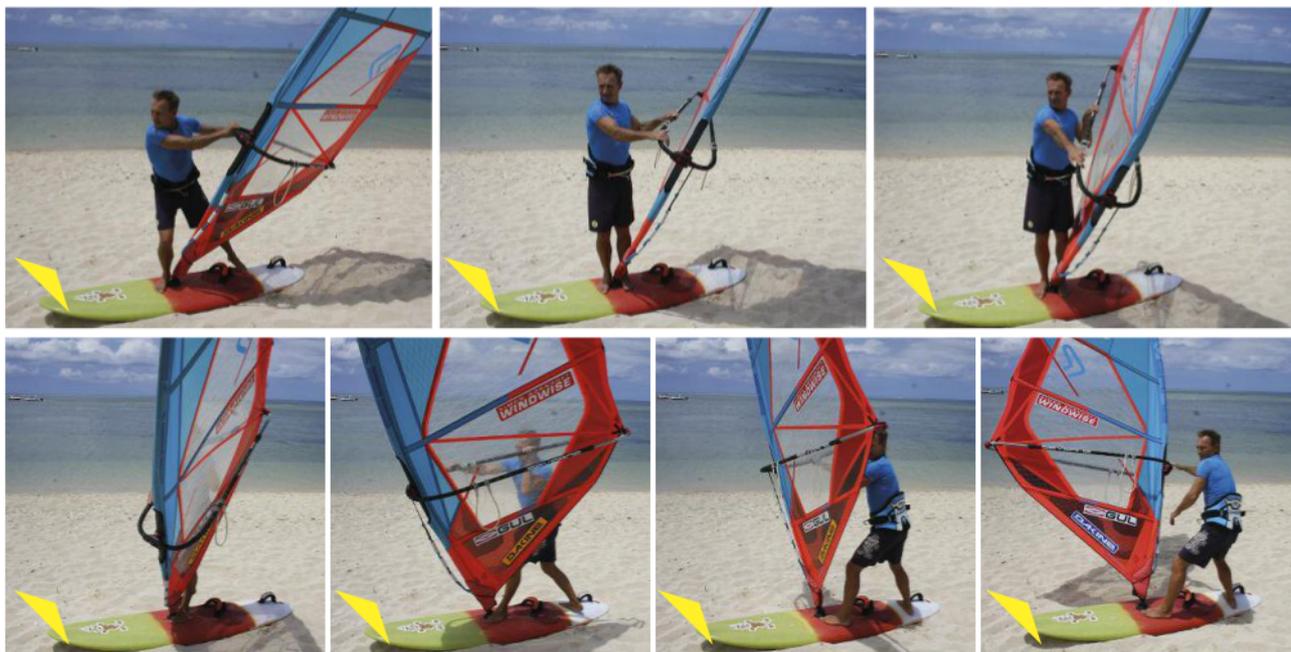


HELICOPTER TACK

As with so many aspects in the Windwise Skills Training System, core skills have a habit of reappearing elsewhere in the sport. Here's Shifting and Switching mid helicopter tack. By reducing the foot movement to a simple, shift, switch you'll create solid foundations for the move, which we'll cover in full later.

Note how the front foot is by the mast base. Warrior, chin on shoulder, is used to rake the rig to turn through the wind.

When the sail touches the rear leg, the rear foot steps forward to wrap around the mast base, to crucially establish a new front foot. As the sail is rotated the new rear foot steps back.



SIMON SAYS...

You'll hopefully have seen how, Vision, Opposition, Warrior stance and similar tight close shift & switch of the feet links into these three different moves. Break it down and practice on land as much as possible, but avoid looking at those feet! As ever any questions fire away and see you on the water for 2018.

SEND SIMON...

a question or suggestion to info@windwise.net! If Windwise answer it in Windsurfing UK, you'll get a fab Windwise Rash Vest!



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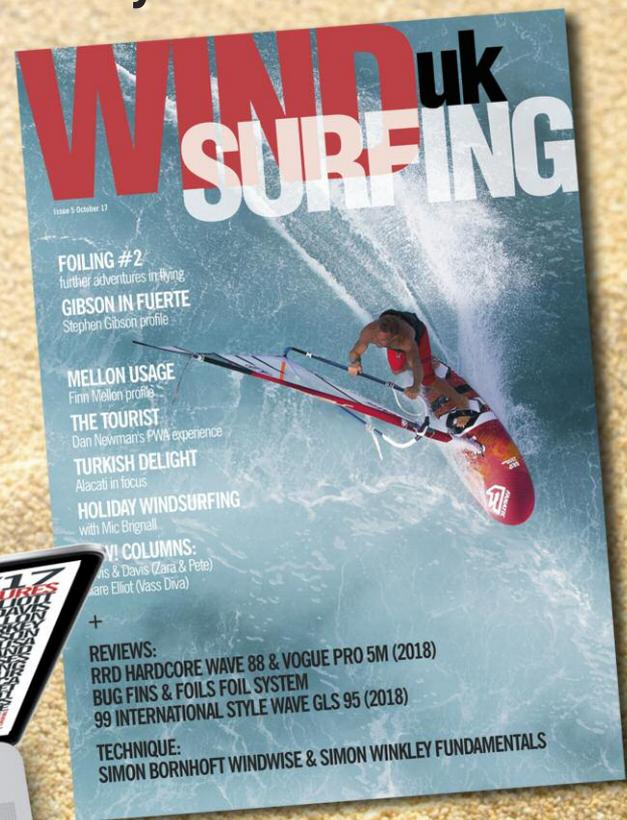
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WIND UK SURFING

Issue 5 October 17

FOILING #2

further adventures in flying

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Stephen Gibson profile

MELLON USAGE

Finn Mellon profile

THE TOURIST

Dan Newman's PWA experience

TURKISH DELIGHT

Alacati in focus

HOLIDAY WINDSURFING

with Mic Brignall

NEW! COLUMNS:

Davis & Davis (Zara & Pete)

Clare Elliot (Vass Diva)

+

REVIEWS:

RRD Hardcore Wave 88 & Vogue Pro 5M (2018)

Bug Fins & Foils Foil System

99 International Style Wave GLS 95 (2018)

TECHNIQUE:

Simon Bornhofs Windwise & Simon Winkley Fundamentals

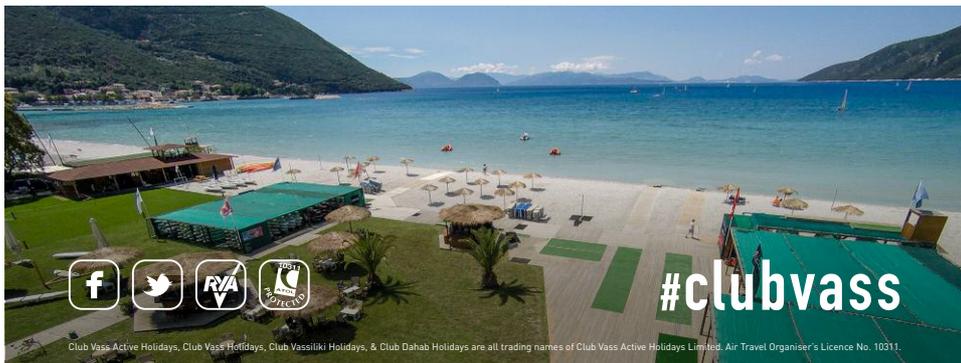


PHOTOGRAPHY

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WINDuk SURFING

FOR THE BETTER...

To echo sentiments elsewhere in this issue of Windsurfing UK (by Pete Davis) it really annoys me when comments are banded round suggesting windsurfing has had its day. If that was the case we wouldn't have as many brands vying for your hard earned coin as we do, beaches wouldn't be stacked with riders every breezy period and windy holiday destinations wouldn't be reporting increasing visitor numbers.

I'll admit there may have been a slump in equipment sales around the time of the economic crash a few years ago. And it may have been a slow claw back from the brink. Brand spanking new wave boards might not be everyone's priority but I'm still seeing new (or newer) gear being rigged up on beaches and smiles miles wide post-session.

New technologies are being put in place as far as manufacturing goes and then of course there's the foiling element that's on everyone's mind and which we dedicate a large chunk of this issue to.

Windsurfing: dead and gone? I think not! The thirst for more brine time is as tangible as ever. It's also nice to see (finally) sailors broadening their horizons in terms of getting out in all kinds of conditions on all types of gear. Marginal wind, strong wind, waves and flat water it's all good!

These days floating about in light airs seems more popular than ever. Maybe we've all realised that time on the water, outside and away from the screen/phone, is more important than chasing full power conditions. It's nice to see and be part of – long may it continue.

TEZ PLAVENIEKS
OCTOBER 2017

Twitter: @tezwoz

Instagram: @tez_plavenieks_sup_wind



Foils (again)

Yes, I know, it's that term again! Sorry to keep on but the fact is windsurf foiling, windfoiling, freefoiling or whatever (however) else you want to describe it looks set to stick. There are still teething issues surrounding the kit – in particular its expense. There's also a fundamental change in thinking needed to become a fully immersed hover boarder. But there's no denying the traction foiling has gained in 2017.

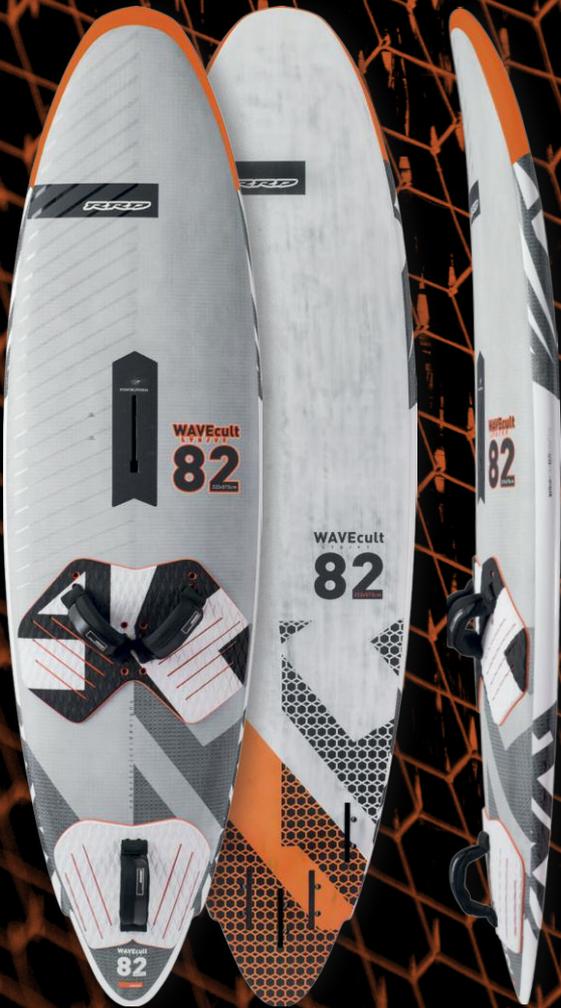
WSUK started the year having shined a testing spotlight on AHD's Shark foil board and AFS-1 foil. We round out our journey by re-examining the same foil coupled with the brand's Sealion Wings 7.6ft – a very different kind of board to the Shark and one which is arguably more accessible. I appreciate there's now a raft of other flying gear available but AHD were one of the first to bring the whole thing to market so it makes sense to focus on the French based company. Stay tuned though as we'll be looking at more foiling equipment moving forwards.

The rest of this issue of Windsurfing UK has a whole heap of other windy goodness for you to lap up. As we head into autumn/winter hopefully you'll be scoring conditions – whatever/wherever they may be – and having a ruddy good ole time afloat. Enjoy the mag and we'll see you again, back at it, in the New Year. Now, go rig up.

RRD

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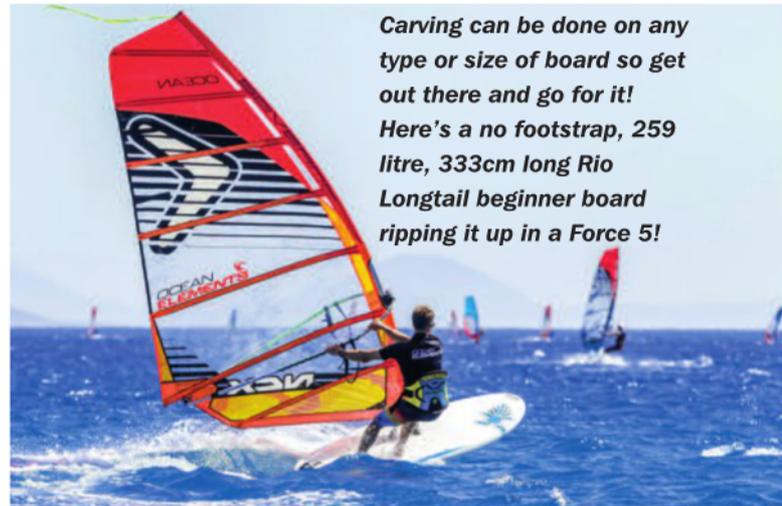
68 - 74 - 82 - 92 - 104 - 114 LTS



A point to note when carving is that, unlike with non-planing turns, no pivoting should be involved while the edge of the board is engaged with the water as this would cause skidding, or the rail to trip and release from the track it is making for itself in the water. Such a technique is used in more advanced forms of windsurfing such as sliding top turns on waves and aerial freestyle.

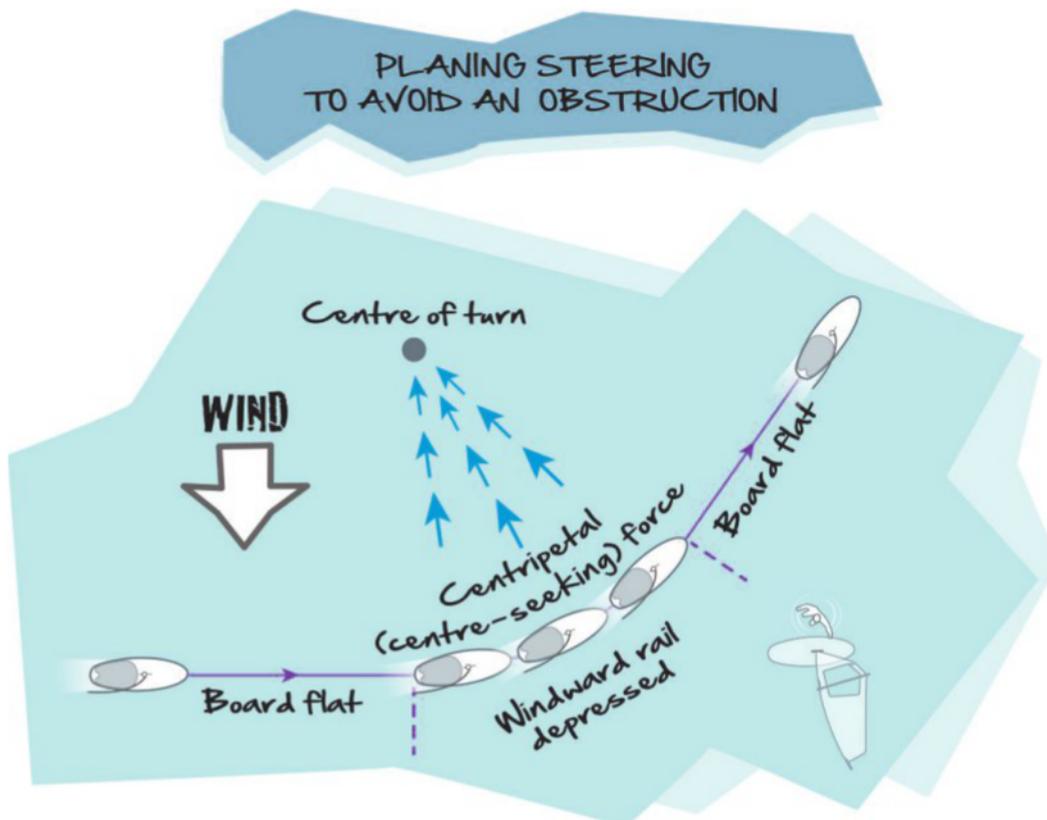
Board design elements such as shape, length, nose and tail rocker, how hard or soft the rails are, footstrap and mastfoot positions, etc. together with fin shape and size have a critical part to play in determining exactly how a board carves in a specific situation yet a basic understanding has been offered here.

So remember to carve the board smoothly and to trust the beautiful world of physics to allow you to lean into your planing turns with confidence, grace and lots of power in the sail. Just don't overdo it and lean too far! Carving can be learned and refined on any type of board from a WindSUP or beginner board to any shape or size



Carving can be done on any type or size of board so get out there and go for it! Here's a no footstrap, 259 litre, 333cm long Rio Longtail beginner board ripping it up in a Force 5!

of freeride board relative to the size and experience of the rider. Slicing-up the water like a surfer or a snowboarder with spray shooting out from the carving rail is right at the core of freeride windsurfing. It's well worth the effort to get to grips with and, once it feels natural, it makes our time on the water so enjoyable.



Planing squiggles on the water are routine and require momentary (yet firm) pressure on heels or toes

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Simon Winkley is a RYA Advanced Windsurfing Instructor and a RYA Windsurfing Trainer running instructor courses across the UK and overseas. He is supported by Starboard, Severne, Bray Lake Watersports and Spinlock. He also provides coaching holidays through Ocean Elements in Vassiliki and coaching weekends at the Official Test Centre in Weymouth.

SIMON WINKLEY 2018 WINDSURF COACHING WEEKS VASSILIKI, GREECE



Simon Winkley, Advanced Instructor and Starboard/Severne Team Rider, returns to deliver two weeks of intermediate to early-advanced coaching in Vassiliki, the magical windsurfing location.

"Simon is a brilliant coach. Two seasons of frustration, crashes and general confusion were overcome within days." (Chris, 2017)

"I had the best windsurfing holiday ever... Simon's enthusiasm and constant energy for coaching is so inspiring... looking forward to 2018!" (Maria, 2017)



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Buggin' out

Bug Fins and Foils windsurf foil

Bug Fins & Foils

Info: www.bugfins.com/windfoils/ Price: 1,390.00€

WORDS AND PICS: WINDSURFING UK

HAVING LOOKED AT ONE PARTICULAR FOIL PRODUCT IN DEPTH (SEE ARTICLE ELSEWHERE) WE THOUGHT IT AN IDEA TO SPOTLIGHT ONE OF THE BOUTIQUE BRANDS OUT THERE PRODUCING THEIR OWN FLYING GEAR. WITH UK SLALOM SAILOR JASON CLARKE UTILISING KIT FROM SLOVENIAN BRAND BUG WE DECIDED TO GET ON THE CASE HERE AND SEE WHAT'S WHAT WITH THEIR CARBON FOILS.

Bug's foil came supplied in modular fashion which makes storage and transport easy – everything bolting together fairly swiftly and efficiently. It's interesting to note how light Bug's foil is with a fair degree of flex through both front and rear wing.

The main wing is 86cm tip to tip with a 77cm fuselage, 96cm high mast capped off with the rear wing measuring 52cm. This is the low wind speed wing with a medium wind option available coming in at 40cm. The shapes of both are compact which are said to give increased stability in flight whilst remaining composed through manoeuvres like gybes.

Once attached via standard deep tuttle fitting it's obvious before even having lifted off the foil is very reactive. The foil's spring can be instantly felt when

leaving the beach. With solid breeze in the mix it's a workable foil that generates a decent level of speed. Whilst not the earliest to take off once up and hovering Bug's foil is composed and dependable. Riders need a touch more power to lift off efficiently but that extra oomph is much more controllable than some early take off foils available.

A pretty good indication of the above is just how raked back a rider's rig can be. There still needs to be front foot bias but you can lock down (on wider boards) much more like in conventional slalom stance. And it's a foil that will cope with slightly windier conditions even when being on a more powered up sail.

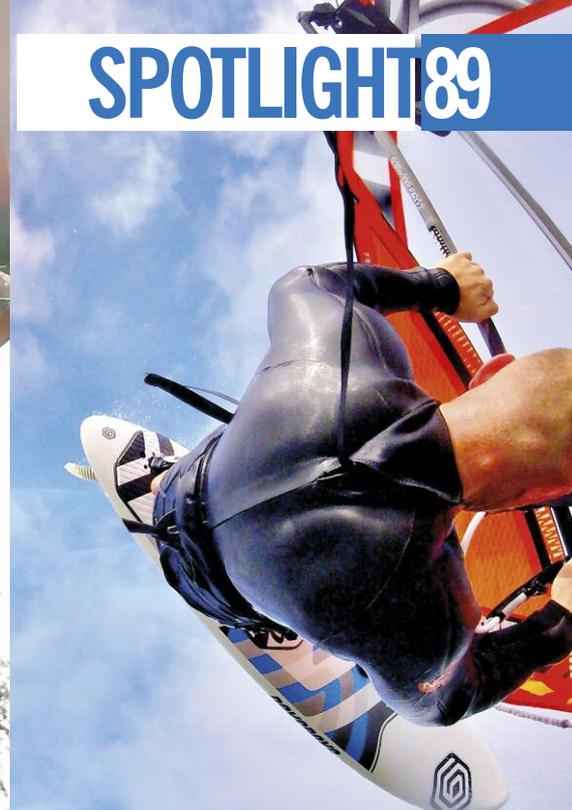
Speed is also efficient with top ends being admirable. As with many foils you're not quite as quick as when windsurfing conventionally, but the



Bug isn't any slouch either, especially when bearing off for a bit of downwind gun running.

Conclusion

Bug's foil is very much of the performance orientated type. Fast and able to cope with a bit more breeze, while keeping manners, it suits moderately wide boards best (too wide and lift suffers). Super light wind flying is possible (sub-10 knots) but we found the optimum sail range to be between 5.2m and 8m. It's a well manufactured bespoke bit of kit that has a big tick in the box for its modular set up – having easily interchangeable wings is a plus. For anyone looking to get into jumping and manoeuvre orientated foiling it would also accommodate.



Old school cool



NoveNove Style Wave GLS 95 2018

Info: www.i-99.it/all-windsurf/ Price: 1,899€ (Pro version: 2,199€)

WORDS AND PICS: WINDSURFING UK

IN A WORLD WHERE MULTI-FIN WINDSURFING BOARDS ARE ALL THE RAGE IT'S EASY TO FORGET THE LOWLY SINGLE FIN, WHICH IN MANY CASES WOULD STILL BE THE BEST CHOICE OF SLED TO COVER AS WIDE A CONDITION SET AS POSSIBLE. NOVENOVE'S STYLE WAVE GLS 95 IS THE HARDER WEARING CONSTRUCTION OF THE BRAND'S FREESTYLE WAVE OFFERING. THE PRO LINE GIVES OPTION OF CHANGING FIN CONFIGURATION VIA ITS SLOT BOX FITTING, WHEREAS THE GLS IS SINGLE ONLY.

Everyone who set eyes on the SW GLS commented how it looked like a classic, established shape. And that it is. At 95L and 61cm wide there are no unnecessary frills with the GLS. Instead riders get a well-made and dependable platform that's more versatile than you'd think.

Setting up the SW GLS is pretty standard fayre with a G10 MFC 25cm Powerbox fin slotting in the rear and soft, comfortable straps able to be configured how riders see fit. For those looking at more blasting orientated riding then it's possible to affix a double back strap whereas manoeuvre focused sailors can go more inboard with single back strap.

For many 95L will be seen as medium strength board. It should be noted, however, the Style Wave GLS copes well in marginal conditions and stronger blows, offering both early planing and control when needed.

Top speed is admirable, riders able to position their back foot right on the rail to drive off the fin and send the board scooting upwind. When a suitable ramp rears up simply slot tootsies back into straps and boost! It's a supremely fulfilling board for jumping with decent air time guaranteed, such is the GLS's projection.

For riders presented with small to medium waves it's surprising how adept a carver the GLS is – even with a

25cm fin. Laying into a drawn out bottom turn the board bites and slingshots back towards the lip where it's super easy to redirect and send buckets. Hardened wave heads may scoff but it's a board that delivers big on the fun factor when riding swells, which is the main thing.

Conclusion

NoveNove's Style wave GLS 95 is a smile inducing board that ticks many boxes for all manner of windsurfer. Out and out freeriders will (literally) have a blast whereas those into wave bashing will find more performance that anticipated – full power top turns being a case in point. Even sliding freestylers will discover a suitable crossover sled that copes well with the odd vulcan, spock or flaka. Good looks, durability and versatility is pretty much the name of the game with the GLS – we're sure many riders would happily own this board as either part of a quiver or stand alone windsurf board for blowier conditions.



Control and composure RRD Hardcore Wave 88 LTD V6 and Vogue Pro 5m

Info: www.robtoriccidesigns.com/equipment/shop/vogue-pro-vogue-hd-mk8 www.robtoriccidesigns.com/equipment/shop/hardcore-wave-ltd-v6

WORDS AND PICS: WINDSURFING UK
WITH AUTUMN/WINTER PRIME WAVE SEASON UPON US HERE IN THE UK ANY SAILOR LOOKING TO TACKLE THE JUICE WILL NEED SOME APT TOOLS FOR THE JOB. WHETHER CHARGING DOWN THE LINE CONDITIONS OR LOOKING FOR ULTIMATE CONTROL IN GNARLY WINDS AND CONFUSED SEAS HAVING THE RIGHT KIT FOR THE JOB IS KEY. ENTER RRD'S HARDCORE WAVE 88L V6 AND VOGUE PRO 5M MK8, BOTH READY AND WILLING TO GET RIDERS REVVED UP AND OUT THERE AMONGST IT.

FIRST LOOKS **Vogue Pro 5m**

Designed by the UK's John Skye with comfort and control in mind RRD's Vogue Pro 5m four batten wave sail is billed as the ultimate tool for when winds become gusty and ferocious. A huge doff of the cap must be given to RRD who have paid great attention to detail and look to help sailors at every step. As such there are a number of visual trim guides to help when rigging and tuning.



MK8 board and sail

Price: Hardcore 88 ltd £2080 Vogue Pro 5.0 £640

Solid construction, but with typical Italian styling and aesthetics, make the Vogue Pro one eye catching piece of gear. Rigging on the brand's Vogue Pro mast it sets easily with minimal fuss. A unique part of the concept is the way the clew has been engineered. Or rather how the eyelets have been integrated. With an outer and inner clew fixing point sailors are free to set outhauls according to how much control they need. For most the outer loop will suffice but if conditions start to ramp up then affixing the outhaul at the inner

setting will improve the Vogue's already exemplary manners. If control's what you need then control's what you'll get.

Hardcore Wave 88L

At 88L RRD's Hardcore Wave will be perceived as on the larger side. But as is the case with many types of board dimensions don't really give the whole story. Look aft and it's immediately apparent how tapered and thinned out the small swallow tail actually is, which should give any experienced rider an indication of what to expect on the water. For an 88L it's also only 58.5cm wide.

Moving forwards and thickness increases with more volume under the mast track. Rocker is ample, especially just off the nose and fixtures and fittings are suitably RRD esque and high end. Flip the HCW 88 over and sailors will be able inspect the hull. A big tick in the box is having five fin boxes to play around with fin configurations. Riders will need an assortment of Slot Box types to achieve this but at least the option is available. Supplied with thruster (2+1) fins, with two blanking covers, there's plenty of room for tweaks to find that optimum positioning.

ON THE WATER Vogue Pro 5m

RRD's Vogue Pro 5m has a pretty grunty bottom end – unsurprising with it being a four batten. On the minimum setting it's a sail that delivers a hearty dose of vroom that'll unstick even the most stubborn of boards. It's also super reactive and responds well from rider input – pumping in marginal winds will see the power switch on instantly.

Once up and running it's a composed ride, especially across chop and confused water states, feeling light in the hands. Taking each run in its stride the Vogue Pro can be thrown at a variety of windsurfing scenarios – from flatter water to waves – without issue. Even though it's billed as a full on wave sail there's plenty of versatility ensuring it finding favour with a wide variety of sailors and styles.

Through moves the Vogue retains its manners perfectly. Round corners there's enough drive to power smaller boards through each turn without losing momentum whilst in the air riders will discover oomph for big boosts and whip to swivel through inverted rotations without issue. For those of a new school, freestyle orientated bent, it also scores highly on this front. The key thing though is just how



composed the 5m remains as gusts hit. The gnarlier the conditions the more the Vogue laps this weather up.

Hardcore Wave 88L

Stepping aboard the HCW 88 and you can feel the board's liveliness straight away. That said it's no slouch on the early planing front relative to its overall shape. With a deft touch getting going in marginal conditions is doable. Riders may need to tweak fin settings to achieve the optimum in lighter airs – especially when looking to boot upwind efficiently. A bigger middle fin may help here.

When winds ramp up, however, the HCW 88L really comes into its own. As power increases its controlled nature really shines and confused water states are no match, even with it being 88 litres. As we said at the start dimensions really don't tell you the whole story. With feet locked in footstraps the HCW 88 performs like a much smaller board. RRD have done a sterling job in terms of getting the volume distribution sorted with enough upfront to help with early planing, and float at rest, right down to impeccable manners once up to speed and being ridden off the tail.

Stepping on rail the HCW 88 is efficient with an edge engaged. Slicing round corners and biting into wave faces is efficient and fulfilling. With enough speed (power in the rig helps) the HCW



88L belts up to lips ready for full power smacks without issue. We'd even suggest being slightly overpowered is a way to best achieve the ultimate whack, after all the tail helps massively with control. Frontside and backside riding is equally rewarding – the more vertical the wave the better. Which is the same with jumping... Whilst the HCW is perfectly hoppable off chop it loves a proper ramp for bigger boosts.



CONCLUSION

As a complete set up for stronger wind action both RRD's Vogue Pro 5m four batten sail and Hardcore Wave 88L board are tools that will get you ripping. Whilst the Vogue is applicable to a wider range of windy conditions the HCW 88L has leanings towards wavier environments or control orientated sailing venues. Both pieces of kit have a vast range of tuning ability and will reward those riders who learn about the gear and understand what settings are applicable to each scenario.

As stand alone bits of kit the Vogue Pro 5m will also suit riders who dabble with the odd flatter water trick whereas the HCW 88L will deliver pure wave riding performance in quality conditions for those who have access.





Juice up
your sailing

Photograph by Peggy Hellrung
Rider Will Ward

Fast and loose, the new Witchcraft Reaper makes even average conditions exciting.

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Reaper 87	2172	2172	596
Reaper 92	2193	2193	611
Reaper 97	2214	2214	624
Reaper 102	2237	2237	637
Reaper 108	2265	2265	651
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Flying high again (or foil findings #2) featuring AHD's Sealion Wings 7.6ft x 29" x 109L

Info: www.ahd-boards.com/models/sealion-wings-2/ and www.kaisports.co.uk **info@kaisports.co.uk** Tel: 02380 840777 **Price:** Sealion Wings Carbon
Price: AFS-1 or AFS-1 Mk2 Carbon Foil complete £1799 **Price:** Either 7'6 or 8'6 Sealion Wings with the AFS-1 or AFS-1 Mk2 foil complete package £3149

WORDS: WINDSURFING UK

PICS: WINDSURFING UK

THIS ISN'T THE FIRST TIME WE'VE PUBLISHED A FOIL RELATED GEAR ARTICLE (SEE REVIEW OF AHD'S SHARK FOIL BOARD ON WSUK'S WEBSITE) AND IT ISN'T THE FIRST TIME WE'VE FEATURED AHD. WHY? BECAUSE AHD WERE ONE OF THE FIRST BRAND'S TO PUT OUT MASS MARKET WINDSURF FOIL EQUIPMENT SO WE THOUGHT IT ONLY RIGHT TO START HERE FIRST. As we near the end of 2017 it'll be the year known as 'the one windsurf foiling properly took off'. Most major brands now have flying gear in their range and some are putting considerable amounts of time, money and R&D into making it truly accessible for the masses.

What was once a niche within a niche – and a pricey one at that – is now broader in appeal. Those long in the tooth, world weary windsurfing stalwarts have even had a glint in the eyes upon the mention of foiling. The positive buzz surrounding hovering in light winds can't be ignored even if there's still some debate about how things will pan out. But back to this particular story...



Back to the start

We've already mentioned it but our foil journey started with AHD's Carbon Shark: a 100% dedicated foiling platform that when coupled with the brand's AFS-1 foil is set to get riders flying in sub-10 knots.

Being honest it took us a while to get familiar with. Conditions DO play a massive part when learning. Gusty winds and choppy sea states don't do anything to help the cause. At the very beginning it's advisable to actually have some wind in the mix (12 ish knots steady side shore breeze being ideal). Trying to learn the ropes in uber light airs (sub 10 knots) is actually quite technical and for a while we were flummoxed. Fast forward a few sessions and things began to click and before long we could claim success.

Kit swap

Swapping the Shark for AHD's Sealion Wings 7.6ft really opened the foiling doors, however. Even though on paper the 7.6ft is slightly smaller, in terms of dimensions, it's a sled that's elevated (pun intended!) our foiling game no end.

With its re-enforced AHD foil box, 100% carbon lay-up and multi-sport diversity (wave windSUP, SUP

surfer, wind foil and SUP foil) the Sealion Wings 7.6ft has been, for us at least, a complete game changer. It's the only windSUP we've tried that performs as a wave board should in surf with a sail attached (see the Sealion Wings 7.6ft write up from WSUK issue four) and it rips around the break in SUP surf mode. (Stay tuned for SUP foiling article coming in our sister publication SUP Mag UK).

As a board alone the Sealion is a unique shape. It's pretty hard to miss with that pronounced swallow tail and twin 16cm fins protruding from the underside. Add to the mix its super comfy and colourful deckpad, well positioned mast track and cleverly shaped hull contours and you have a board that's desirable without additional foil bits. We've said it before but in our opinion the Sealion range should be WAY more popular in the UK than it is. It's a board that could/will save many a session – especially if you have waves in mind.



& AFS-1 foil

7'6 or 8'6 with Twin Fins £1579

This ain't no review

Before we go on this article isn't so much an equipment review as a 'these are our foil findings whilst using the Sealion Wings 7.6ft'. There's a long way to go before we consider ourselves experts. Instead what we're attempting to do here is convey how things have been during our time with this kit and hopefully inspire other riders to get involved with flying.

Taking off – sans footstraps

One of the biggest advantages for our foiling exploits is the 7.6ft's lack of deck clutter. Some foiler tips suggest front straps help lock riders onto the board which can help during take offs. We actually found having the ability to tweak foot placement was more rewarding. With just a few millimetres of movement riders can find the optimum position without being constrained. Depending on wind strength, gustiness, tootsies can move to optimums. If it's on the lighter side, for instance, then feet planted more centrally is better. As the wind increases you can then move outboard accordingly.

The back foot also doesn't really need a strap. Again, tips from the top suggest removing back types during learning anyway. We'd then not see any reason to revert. Also, with AHD's AFS-1 foil sometimes it's key to being able to bring your back foot closer to the mast, while at other times a wider stance is needed.

Lift control

AHD's AFS-1 foil is designed to be early flying and deliver riders to fully foiling in light airs. With a 5.3m,

and (again) steady wind, lift off became increasingly efficient. We found in low wind strengths a sail with grunty bottom end power helped during lift offs. Five batten rigs tended to be the most balanced for upright stance foiling with slightly more downhaul/outhaul than you'd initially think helping control foil lift once flying. The whole rig thing is a fine line and a degree of experimentation is needed to find what works for you – we're sure the subtle nuances of foiling will change depending on rider weight, ability and kit being used.

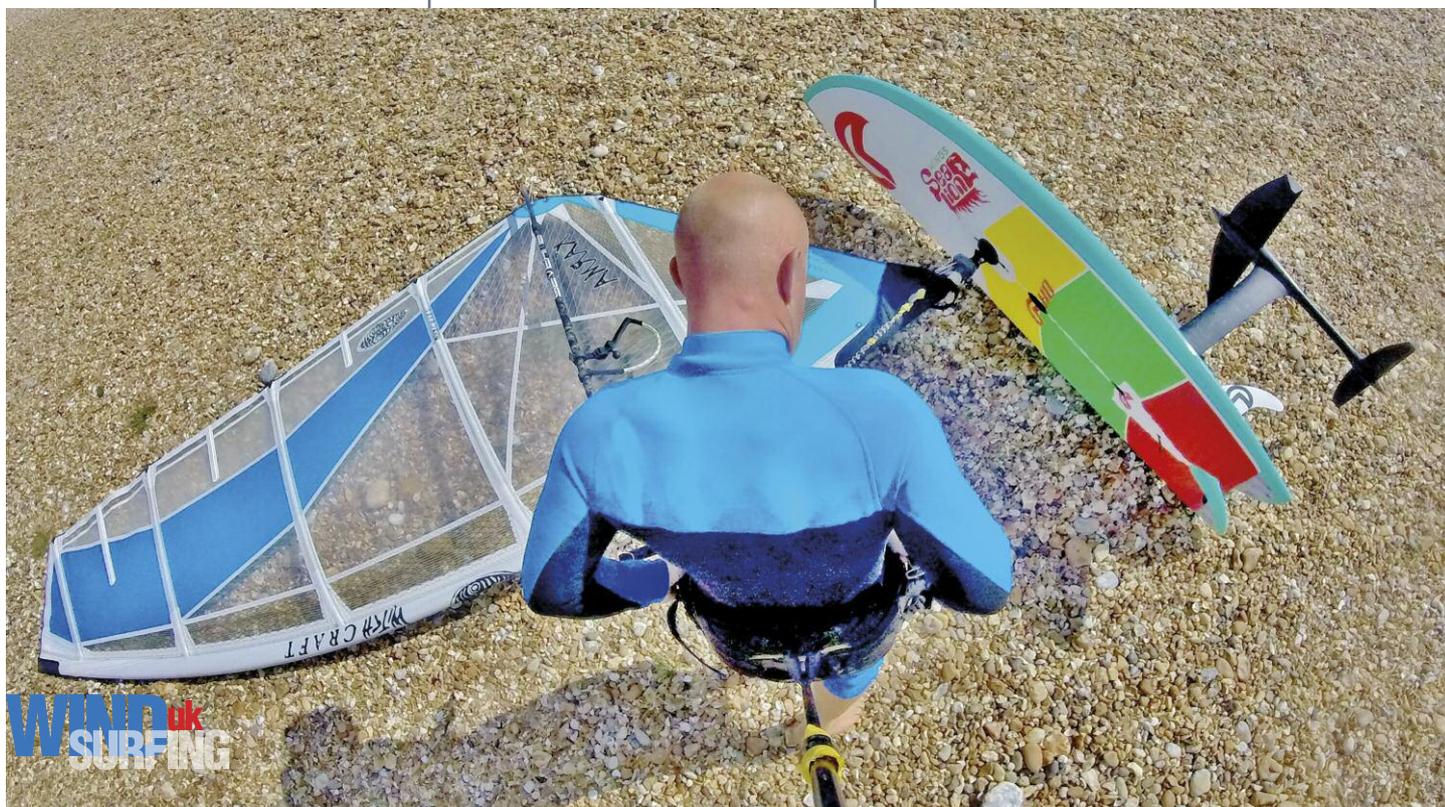
Moving up the wind strength spectrum and we've had the Sealion Wings 7.6ft and AFS-1 foil out in 22 knots with a 4.2m. Whilst doable it definitely feels like you've reached the foil's limit. The main problem with too much sail power and/or too much wind is over foiling. You can tell when it's going to happen. The foil starts gurgling, riders lift (what feels like) even higher and then suddenly you drop from the air – during initial phases resulting in a hard nose first touchdown and subsequent catapult.

You can control the sails power, and ultimately foil's lift, by subtly sheeting in and out. As winds get

stronger, however, you find dumping power more critical and the whole ride becomes uncomfortable. For sure, changing down sail sizes helps but you do reach a point... (There is a new Mk2 front wing for the AFS-1, which we are about to be loaned. This is a higher speed foil, aimed at the wind foiling side of the performance envelope. This we are told lifts slightly later so needs more oomph for take off, but is smoother and more comfortable as speeds increase. We can't wait to transition onto this while using the original wing for SUP foiling).

Something else we'll mention is using harness and lines. We find ourselves often switching between hooked in and not bothering at all. If the wind's stronger then committing slightly more to the harness helps with rig control (make sure lines are long).

In light airs, when the sail needs to be more upright, not using the harness feels more efficient. Due to its frictionless ride, and reduced rig pressure, they're not actually needed during flight. Initial hovering is helped by a degree of mastfoot pressure from being hooked in, but having taken off riders could





unhook if they prefer. More proficient riders may scoff at this but from our experience it's not essential.

To side fin or not

During our first forays with AHD's Sealion Wings 7.6ft we attached the 16cm fibreglass side fins. In our head, although we appreciated this would increase drag, they would help with tracking on such a short board. Placebo or not it seemed to help during the taxiing phase. After a few sessions, however, we removed them altogether for foiling. The result being even earlier take offs and not catching the water if the ride



becomes undulating – something that can cause sailors to drop off the foil.

Moves and manoeuvres

At time of writing we're still mastering the art of gybing on the foil, which is one of the trickiest aspects. Get it right and there's a hugely fulfilling sensation that washes over. Unfortunately it's easy to get wrong!

Even sans footstrap gybing AHD's Sealion Wings 7.6ft is doable though. Simply use your vision/head to subtly guide the kit in desired direction. An early rig change yields best results before a quick and efficient foot change, which will take a few goes to get dialled in. The AFS-1 foil, as with all foils, does want to steer you back onto original its course, so a degree of commitment is needed. That said, you'll be surprised how stoked you'll be when nailing a foiling turn.

CONCLUSION

It's been a privilege to have had the opportunity to spend time getting to know a product like the AHD Sealion Wings 7.6ft and AFS-1 foil – big thanks to Jon Popkiss at Kai Sports for that. Without the time it wouldn't have been possible to get to where we're at now with foiling.

In terms of kit, AHD's Sealion is hands down one of our favourite boards to ride. Usually not so gushing, but the fact it offers bona fide performance in wave windSUP mode whilst being able to accommodate paddling antics and, of course, windsurf foiling, puts it high on Windsurfing UK's list of essential products. Having the ability to switch sports with one (or rather two if you include the AFS-1 foil) piece of gear is key.

For windsurfers looking for a more efficient way to enjoy 12-18 knots worth of wind then a package like this could potentially suit thereby doing away with big rigs – the biggest sail you'll need is 6m. If you're after sub-10 knot foiling action then a 7m (ish) will still be needed, however.

We'll not lie: there's a lot of crashing when learning to windsurf foil and a degree of perseverance will be needed. Wider boards may see a quicker learning groove but the Sealion Wings 7.6ft allows riders to develop a more subtle technique that will see all types of foiling kit able to be ridden from there on in.

For those contemplating windsurf foiling then the Sealion and AFS-1 package may suit – especially if you're into multiple disciplines such as SUP. As foiling continues to evolve we're sure other equally versatile products will emerge but for a brand that were there first AHD's offering would be a good choice for many.



Sealion/AFS-1 foil design notes with AHD's Bruno Andre

OFF THE BACK OF OUR FOILING EXPERIENCES WITH AHD'S SEALION WINGS 7.6FT, WE CAUGHT UP WITH ONE OF THE MAIN DESIGNERS AND UBER ENTHUSIASTIC SEALION USER, BRUNO ANDRE, TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE CONCEPT.

Tell us about the first time you foiled on a windsurfer. Where was it and how did it feel?

I tried wind foiling the first time in winter 2006. My Friends (ex-pro windsurfers) Manu Bertin and Paolo Rista were working on foils for surfing big waves. They let me try on my windsurf board after adapting a box. Then I bought an aluminium Randle foil from Kevin Ozze. And since that time I've not stopped.

What made you realise foiling had potential?

The amazing feeling of piloting one, simply! Even with an aluminium foil, which was too heavy and required a certain level of wind and speed to take off, the feeling was incredible. Then I thought what about something lighter and more powerful? That might be the thing to fly efficiently and could offer crazy sensations in light winds. Needless to say this turned out to be the case.



Talk to us about the Sealion Wings concept. It's pretty much one of the first multi-discipline boards out there. Where did the idea come from?

The idea came about ten years ago. I believe (like in the UK) we have many good spots here in Brittany with perfect waves but with predominantly ultra-light, side offshore breeze. I am in love with windsurfing and I try to sail as soon as the wind allows. The Sealion is a surfboard that sails and allows riders to get on the water super early. Stand up paddling and foiling arrived at that 'meeting point' around the same time. I guess it was destiny.

Was it key that you could SUP and wind foil the Wings from the start?

I started foiling my Sealion in 2009. When we developed our first foil (the AFS-1) we realised it worked at really slow speed (5/6 knots). When you know you can comfortably fly in 10/11 knots on a wave you understand something is possible. I am really proud and happy to have proven the concept.

Do you see this kind of multi-discipline equipment as the future?

DEFINITELY! Life is evolving day by day. People do the maximum things they can with work and family responsibilities allowing. We are all multi-discipline individuals inside, even if we don't know it yet. I

believe a particular tool like the Sealion that can be used in different ways, and shared with friends and family, is key to maximising water time and increasing those smiles. There's nothing worse than turning up to a beach on a good forecast and it not delivering. With the Sealion Wings (or even standard non-foiling Sealion) you can still get out there and enjoy a session.

And what about foiling in general – where do you see this going? Are we going to end up with foilers at every location soon?

Competitors are pushing the discipline to the extreme in slalom, speed and even manoeuvre orientated sailing. I believe foiling is the solution to fly with small and light equipment in low winds. But 10m and big boards are needed now to perform in races. We might see two distinct pathways to wind foiling: racing and free foiling – the latter being what most riders will do.

Is there a limit on foiling do you think – in terms of wind strength and what you can and can't achieve?

We must look at it like any other new sport. The new generation will make it 'science fiction' for our older minds – much like freestyle and wavesailing is now. I was one of the first pushing freestyle at the beginning. Five years later I did not understand the moves younger guys

were creating! Foiling will go the same crazy way – at least the upper echelons. For most of us though it'll be about free foiling and increasing time of the water in light winds.

Any new projects you can give a sneak peek about?

The idea is to keep developing and make foiling as accessible as it can be. And sometimes during that R&D phase something amazing happens and changes the game.

What about your foiling plans for the rest of the year – got anything in the diary?

We will keep working and searching to make the foil disciplines always more exciting with more performance and accessibility. I will keep enjoying my rides whilst sharing and promoting wind foil and SUP foil. I believe every windsurfer will foil in the future. You can't miss that. It is a new breath for the windsurfing. It's the modern way and a new spark that will rekindle a long smouldering fire.

Thanks and praise?

Thanks to my AHD boards crew who believed in the Sealion and foil concept so early in the day before anybody else really did. Being innovative, when you are a smaller brand isn't easy. And respect to the pioneers who tried foiling a long time ago. Thanks to all the guys who made what we're doing today possible.



Photograph by Gary Fisher
Rider Will Ward

TIMING AND PRECISION

A true aerial is one of the most difficult moves in wave sailing but delivers big rewards. Smacking the lip just right will throw you forward with serious momentum. A good aerial requires a powerful bottom turn combined with timing and precision – riders need to hit the wave in exactly the right spot. The Slayer’s drive, with ability to maintain balance and composure during a hard driving bottom turn, gives you the needed speed whilst allowing sailors to focus on their timing and precision.

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